[redacted]

THE

BRITISH NOVELISTS;

WITH

AN ESSAY;

AND

PREFACES,

BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL,

BY

MRS. BARBAULD.

VOL. IX.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR F. C. AND J. RIVINGTON; W. OTRIDGE AND SON, A. STRAHAN, T. PAYNE, G. ROBINSON; W. LOWNDES; WILKIE AND ROBINSON; SCATCHERD AND LETTERMAN, J. WALKER; VERNOR, HOOD, AND SHARPE, R. LEA; J. NUNN, LACKINGTON AND CO.; CLARKE AND SON; C LAW; LONGMAN, HURST, REES, AND ORME; CADELL AND DAVIES; E. JEFFERY; J K. NEWMAN; CROSBY AND CO. CARPENTER; S. BAGSTER; T. BOOTH; J. MURRAY, J. AND J. RICHARDSON; BLACK, PARRY, AND KINGSBURY; J. HARDING, R. PHILLIPS; J. MAWMAN; J. BOOKER; J. ASPERNE; R. BALDWIN; MATHEWS AND LEIGH; J. FAULDER; JOHNSON AND CO., W. CREECH, EDINBURGH; AND WILSON AND SON, YORK.

1810.

Printed by T. DAVISON, Lombard-street,
Whitefriars, London.

PREFACE.

THE Editor of the following Letters takes leave to observe, that he has now, in this publication, completed the plan, that was the object of his wishes, rather than of his hopes, to accomplish.

The first collection which he published, intituled PAMELA, exhibited the beauty and superiority of virtue in an innocent and unpolished mind, with the reward which often, even in this life, a protecting Providence bestows on goodness. A young woman of low degree, relating to her honest parents the severe trials she met with from a master who ought to have been the protector, not the assailer of her honour, shews the character of a libertine in its truly contemptible light. This libertine, however, from the foundation of good principles laid in his early years by an excellent mother; by his passion for a virtuous young woman; and by her amiable example, and unwearied patience, when she became his wife; is, after a length of time, perfectly reclaimed.

The second collection, published under the title of CLARISSA, displayed a more melancholy scene. A young lady of higher fortune, and born to happier

hopes, is seen involved in such variety of deep distresses, as lead her to an untimely death; affording a warning to parents against forcing the inclinations of their children in the most important article of their lives; and to children against hoping too far from the fairest assurances of a man void of principle. The heroine, however, as a truly *Christian heroine*, proves superior to her trials; and her heart, always excellent, refined and exalted by every one of them, rejoices in the approach of a happy eternity. Her cruel destroyer appears wretched and disappointed, even in the boasted success of his vile machinations: but still (buoyed up with self-conceit and vain presumption) he goes on, after every short fit of imperfect, yet terrifying conviction, hardening himself more and more; till, unreclaimed by the most affecting warnin s, and repeated admonitions, he perishes miserably in the bloom of life, and sinks into the grave oppressed with guilt, remorse, and horror. His letters, it is hoped, afford many useful lessons to the gay part of mankind against that misuse of wit and youth, of rank and fortune, and of every outward accomplishment, which turns them into a curse to the miserable possessor, as well as to all around him.

Here the Editor apprehended he should be obliged to stop, by reason of his precarious state of health, and a variety of avocations which claimed his first attention: but it was insisted on by several of his friends, who were well assured he had the materials-

in his power, that he should produce into public view the character and actions of a man of TRUE HONOUR.

He has been enabled to obey these his friends, and to complete his first design: and now, therefore, presents to the public, in Sir CHARLES GRANDISON, the example of a man acting uniformly well through a variety of trying scenes, because all his actions are regulated by one steady principle: a man of religion and virtue; of liveliness and spirit; accomplished and agreeable; happy in himself, and a blessing to others.

From what has been premised, it may be supposed, that the present collection is not published ultimately, nor even principally, any more than the other two, for the sake of entertainment only. A much nobler end is in view. Yet it is hoped the variety of characters and conversations necessarily introduced into so large a correspondence as these volumes contain, will enliven as well as instruct: the rather, as the principal correspondents are young ladies of polite education, and of lively spirits.

The nature of familiar letters, written, as it were, to the *moment*, while the heart is agitated by hopes and fears, on events undecided, must plead an excuse for the bulk of a collection of this kind. Mere facts and characters might be comprised in a much smaller compass: but, would they be equally interesting? It happens fortunately, that an account of

the juvenile years of the principal person is narratively given in some of the letters. As many, however, as could be spared, have been omitted. There is not one episode in the whole; nor, after Sir CHARLES GRANDISON is introduced, one letter inserted but what tends to illustrate the principal design. Those which precede his introduction, will not, it is hoped, be judged unnecessary on the whole, as they tend to make the reader acquainted with persons, the history of most of whom is closely interwoven with that of Sir Charles.

SONNET.

SWEET moralist, whose generous labours tend,
With ceaseless diligence, to guide the mind,
In the wild maze of error wandering blind,
To virtue, truth, and honour, glorious end

Of glorious toils! Vainly would I commend,
In numbers worthy of your sense refin'd,
This last great work, which leaves all praise behind,
And july styles you of mankind the friend:

Pleasure with profit artful while you blend,
And now the fancy, now the judgment feed
With grateful change, which every passion sways
Numbers, who ne'er to graver lore attend,
Caught by the charm, grow virtuous as they read;
And lives reform'd shall give you genuine praise.

T. E.

NAEMS OF THE PRINCIPAL PERSONS.

MEN.

George Selby, *Esq.*
John Greville, *Esq.*
Richard Fenwick, *Esq.*
Robert Orme, *Esq.*
Archibald Reeves, *Esq.*
Sir Rowland Meredith, *Knt.*
James Fowler, *Esq.*
Sir Hargrave Pollexfen, *Bart.*
The Earl of L. *a Scottish nobleman.*
Thomas Deane, *Esq.*
Sir Charles Grandison, *Bart.*
James Bagenhall, *Esq.*
Mr. Solomon Merceda.
John Jordan, *Esq.*
Sir Harry Beauchamp, *Bart.*
Edward Beauchamp, *Esq. his son.*
Everard Grandison, *Esq.*
The Rev. Dr. Bartlett.
Lord W. *uncle to Sir* Charles Grandison.
Lord G. *son of the Earl of* G.

ITALIANS.

Marchese della Porretta, *the father.*
Marchese della Porretta, *his eldest son.*
The Bishop of Nocera, *his second son.*
Signor Jeronymo *della* Porretta, *third son.*
Conte della Porretta, *their uncle.*
Count of Belvedere.
Father Marescotti.

WOMEN.

Miss Harriet Byron.

Mrs. Shirley, *her grandmother, by the mother's side.*

Mrs. Selby, *sister to Miss* Byron's *father, and wife of Mr.* Selby.

Miss Lucy } Selby, *nieces to Mr.* Selby.
Miss Nancy }

Miss Orme, *sister of Mr.* Orme.

Mrs. Reeves, *wife of Mr.* Reeves, *cousin of Miss* Byron.

Lady Betty Williams.

The Countess of L. *wife of Lord* L. *eldest sister of Sir* Charles Grandison.

Miss Grandison, *younger sister of Sir* Charles.

Mrs. Eleanor Grandison, *aunt to Sir* Charles.

Miss Emily Jervois, *his ward.*

Lady Mansfield.

Lady Beauchamp.

The Countess Dowager of D.

Mrs. Hortensia Beaumont.

ITALIANS.

Marchesa della Porretta.

Signora Clementina, *her daughter.*

Signora Juliana Sforza, *sister to the Marchese della* Porretta.

Signora Laurana, *her daughter.*

Signora Olivia.

Camilla, *Lady* Clementina's *governess.*

Laura, *her maid.*

THE

HISTORY



OF

SIR CHARLES GRANDISON, BART.

LETTER I.

MISS LUCY SELBY TO MISS HARRIET BYRON.

Ashby-Canons, January 10.

YOUR resolution to accompany Mrs. Reeves to London, has greatly alarmed your three lovers: and two of them, at least, will let you know that it has. Such a lovely girl as my Harriet, must expect to be more accountable for her steps than one less excellent and less attractive.

Mr. Greville, in his usual resolute way, threatens to follow you to London; and there, he says, he will watch the motions of every man who approaches you; and, if he find reason for it, will *early* let such man know *his* pretensions, and the danger he may run into, if he pretend to be his competitor. But let me not do him injustice; though he talks of a rival thus harshly, he speaks of you more highly than man ever spoke of woman. Angel and goddess are

phrases you have been used to from him; and though spoken in his humorous way, yet I am sure he most sincerely admires you.

Mr. Fenwick, in a less determined manner, declares, that he will follow you to town, if you stay there above *one* fortnight.

The gentle Orme sighs his apprehensions, and wishes you would change your purpose. Though hopeless, he says, it is some pleasure to him that he can think himself in the same county with you; and much more, that he can tread in your footsteps to and from church every Sunday, and behold you there. He wonders how your grandmamma, your aunt, your uncle, can spare you. Your cousin Reeves's surely, he says, are very happy in their influences over us all.

Each of the gentlemen is afraid, that by increasing the number of your admirers, you will increase his difficulties: but what is that to them, I asked, when they already know, that you are not inclined to favour any of the three?

If you hold your resolution, and my cousin Reeves's their time of setting out, pray let me know, and I will attend you at my uncle Selby's, to wish you a good journey, much pleasure in town, and a return with a safe and sound heart. My sister, who, poor dear girl, continues extremely weak and low, will spare me for a purpose so indispensable. I will not have you come to *us*. I know it would grieve you to see her in the way she is in. You too much take to heart the infirmities of your friends which you cannot cure; and as your grandmamma lives upon your smiles, and you rejoice all your friends by your cheerfulness, it would be cruel to make you sad.

* * *

Mr. Greville has just left us. He dropt in upon us as we were going to dinner. My grandmother

Selby you know is always pleased with his rattling. She prevailed on him to alight, and sit down with us. All his talk was of you. He repeated his former *threatenings* (as I called them to him) on your going to town. After dinner, he read us a letter from Lady Frampton relating to you. He read us also some passages from the copy of his answer, with design, I believe, that I should ask him to leave it behind him. He is a vain creature, you know, and seemed fond of what he had written. I *did* ask him. He pretended to make a scruple of *your* seeing it; but it was a faint one. However, he called for pen and ink; and when it was brought him, scratched over two passages, and that with so many little flourishes (as you will see) that he thought they could not be read. But the ink I furnished him with, happening to be paler than his, you will find he was not cunning enough. I promised to return it.

Send me a line by the bearer, to tell me if your resolution holds as to the day.

Adieu, my dearest Harriet. May angels protect and guide you whithersoever you go!

LUCY SELBY.

LETTER II.

MR. GREVILLE TO LADY FRAMPTON.

[*Inclosed in the preceding.*]

Northampton, January 6.

YOUR ladyship demands a description of the person of the celebrated Miss Byron in our neighbourhood; and to know, whether, as report tells you, love has listed me in the number of her particular admirers?—*Particular* admirers you well distinguish; since every one who beholds her admires her.

Your ladyship confines your enquiries to her *person*, you tell me; and you own, that women are much more solicitous about the beauties of *that*, than of the *mind*. Perhaps it may be so; and that their envy is much sooner excited by the one than the other. But who, madam, can describe the person of Miss Harriet Byron, and her person only; animated as every feature is by a mind that bespeaks all human excellence, and dignifies her in every air, in every look, in every motion?

No man living has a greater passion for beauty than I have. Till I knew Miss Byron, I was one of those who regarded nothing else in the sex. Indeed, I considered all intellectual attainments as either useless or impertinent in women. Your ladyship knows what were my free notions on this head, and has rebuked me for them. A wise, a learned lady, I considered as a very unnatural character. I wanted women to be all love, and nothing else. A *very* little prudence allowed I to enter into their composition; just enough to distinguish the man of sense from the fool; and that for my *own* sake. You know I have vanity, madam: but lovely as Miss Byron's person is, I defy the greatest sensualist on earth not to admire her mind more than her person. What a triumph would the devil have, as I have often thought, when I have stood contemplating her perfections, especially at church, were he able to raise up a man that could lower this angel into woman?—Pardon me!—Your ladyship knows my mad way of saying every thing that rises to my thoughts.

Sweetness of temper must make plain features glow: what an effect must it then have upon fine ones? Never *was* there a sweeter-tempered woman. Indeed from sixteen to twenty, all the sex (kept in humour by their hopes, and by their attractions) are *said* to be good-tempered; but she is remarka-

bly so. She is just turned of twenty, but looks not more than seventeen. Her beauty hardly yet in its full blow, will last longer, I imagine, than in an earlier blossom. Yet the prudence visible in her whole aspect, gave her a distinction, even at twelve, that promised what she would be at a riper age.

Yet with all this reigning good-nature visible in her face and manner, there is such a native dignity in all she says, in all she does (though mingled with a frankness that shews her mind's superiority to the minds of almost all other women) that it damps and suppresses, in the most audacious, all imaginations of bold familiarity.

I know not, by my soul, how she does this neither: yet so it is. She jests; she raillies: but I cannot railly her again. Love, it is said, dignifies the adored object. Perhaps it is *that* which awes me.

And now will your ladyship doubt of an affirmative answer to your second question, Whether love has listed me in the number of her particular admirers?

He has: and the devil take me if I can help myself: and yet I have no encouragement—nor anybody else; that's my consolation. Fenwick is deeper in, if possible, than I. We had at our first acquaintance, as you have heard, a tilting-bout on the occasion: but are sworn friends now; each having agreed to try his fortune by patience and perseverance; and being assured that the one has no more of her favour to boast of, than the other *. " We have indeed blustered away between us half a score more of her admirers. Poor whining Orme, however, per-

* The passages in this letter thus marked (") are those which in the preceding one are said to be scratched out; but yet were legible by holding up the letter to the light.

severes. But of him we make no account: he has a watery head, and though he finds a way, by his sister, who visits at Mr. Selby's, and is much esteemed there, to let Miss Byron know his passion for her, notwithstanding the negative he has received; yet doubt we not that she is safe from a flame that he will quench with his tears, before it can rise to a head to disturb us.

"You ladies love men should whine after you: but never yet did I find, that where a blustering fellow was a competitor, the lady married the milksop."

But let me in this particular do Miss Byron justice: how she manages it I cannot tell; but she is courteous to all; nor could ever any man charge her either with pride or cruelty. All I fear, is, that she has such an equality in her temper, that she can hardly find room in her heart for a particular love: Nor will, till she meets with one whose mind is nearly as faultless as her own; and the general tenor of whose life and actions calls upon her discretion to give her *leave* to love. "This apprehension I owe to a conversation I had with her grandmother Shirley; a lady that is an ornament to old age; and who hinted to me, that her grand-daughter had exceptions both to Fenwick and me, on the score of a *few* indulgences that perhaps have been *too* public; but which all men of fashion and spirit give themselves, and all women, but *this*, allow of, or hate not men the worse for. But then what is her objection to Orme? He is a sober dog."

She was but eight years old when her mother died. She also was an excellent woman. Her death was brought on by grief for that of her husband; which happened but six months before—a rare instance!

The grandmother and aunt, to whom the girl

is dutiful to a proverb, will not interfere with her choice. If *they* are applied to for their interest, the answer is constantly this: the approbation of their Harriet must be first gained, and then their consent is ready.

There is a Mr. Deane, a man of an excellent character for a lawyer; but indeed he left off practice o.. coming into possession of a handsome estate. He was the girl's godfather. He is allowed to have great influence over them all. Harriet calls him papa. To him I have applied: but his answer is the very same: his *daughter* Harriet must choose for herself: all motions of this kind must come first from *her*.

And ought *I* to despair of succeeding with the girl *herself?* I, her Greville; not contemptible in person; an air—free and easy, *at least;* having a good estate in possession; fine expectances besides; dressing well, singing well, dancing well, and blest with a moderate share of confidence; which makes *other* women think me a clever fellow: she, a girl of twenty; her fortune between ten and fifteen thousand pounds only; for her father's considerable estate, on his demise, for want of male heirs, went with the name; her grandmother's jointure not more than 500l. a year.—And what though her uncle Selby has no children, and loves her, yet has he nephews and nieces of his own, whom he also loves; for this Harriet is his wife's niece.

I will *not* despair. If resolution, if perseverance will do, and if she be a woman, she shall be mine—and so I have told her aunt Selby, and her uncle too; and so I have told Miss Lucy Selby, her cousin, as she calls her, who is highly and deservedly in her favour; and so indeed have I more than once told the girl herself.

But now to the description of her person—Let me

die, if I know where to begin. She is all over loveliness. Does not every-body else who has seen her tell you so? Her stature; shall I begin with her stature? She cannot be said to be tall; but yet is something above the middling. Her shape—But what care I for her shape? I, who hope to love her still more, though possession may make me admire her less, when she has not that to boast of? We young fellows who have been abroad, are above regarding English shapes, and prefer to them the French negligence. By the way, I think the foreign ladies in the right, that they aim not at what they cannot attain. Whether *we* are so much in the right to come into their taste, is another thing. But be this as it will, there is so much ease and dignity in the person, in the dress, and in every air and motion, of Miss Harriet Byron, that fine shapes will ever be in fashion where she is, be either native or foreigner the judge.

Her complexion is admirably fair and clear. I have sat admiring her complexion, till I have imagined I have seen the life-blood flowing with equal course through her translucent veins.

Her forehead, so nobly free and open, shews dignity and modesty, and strikes into one a kind of *awe*, singly contemplated, that (from the *delight* which accompanies the *awe*) I know not how to describe. Every single feature, in short, will bear the nicest examination; and her whole face, and her neck, so admirably set on her finely-proportioned shoulders —let me perish, if, taking her altogether, I do not hold her to be the most unexceptionable beauty I ever beheld. But what still is her *particular* excellence, and distinguishes her from all other *English* women (for it must be acknowledged to be a characteristic of the French women of quality) is the grace which that people call *physiognomy*, and we may

call *expression:* had *not* her features and her complexion been so fine as they are, that grace alone, that soul shining out in her lovely aspect, joined with the ease and gracefulness of her motion, would have made her as many admirers as beholders.

After this, shall I descend to a more particular description?—I will.

Her cheek—I never *saw* a cheek so beautifully turned; illustrated as it is by a charming carmine flush, which denotes sound health. A most bewitching dimple takes place in each when she smiles; and she has so much reason to be pleased with herself, and with all about her (for she is the idol of her relations) that I believe from infancy she never frowned; nor can a frown, it is my opinion, sit upon her face for a minute. Would to Heaven I were considerable enough with her to prove the contrary!

Her mouth—There never *was* so lovely a mouth. But no wonder; since such rosy lips, and such ivory and even teeth, must give beauty to a mouth less charming than hers.

Her nose adds dignity to her other features. Her chin is sweetly turned, and almost imperceptibly dimpled.

Her eyes;—Ay, madam, her eyes!—Good heaven! what a lustre; yet not a fierce, but a mild lustre! How have I despised the romancing poets for their unnatural descriptions of the eyes of their heroines! But I have thought those descriptions, though absurd enough in conscience, less absurd (allowing something for poetical licence) ever since I beheld those of Miss Harriet Byron.

Her hair is a real and unlaboured ornament to her. All natural its curls: art has no share in the lustre it gives to her other beauties.

I mentioned her neck—Here I dare not trust myself—Inimitable creature! All-attracting loveliness.

Her arm—Your ladyship knows my passion for a delicate arm. By my soul, madam, your own does not exceed it.

Her hands are extremely fine. Such fingers! And they accustomed to the pen, to the needle, to the harpsichord; excelling in all—O madam; women *have* souls. I now am convinced they have. I dare own to your ladyship, that once I doubted it, on a supposition that they were given us for temporary purposes only. And have I not seen her dance! have I not heard her sing! But indeed, mind and person, she is all harmony.

Then for reading, for acquired knowledge, what lady so young—But you know the character of her grandfather Shirley. He was a man of universal learning, and, from his public employments abroad, as polite as learned. This girl, from seven years of age, when he came to settle in England, to fourteen, when she lost him, was his delight; and her education and instruction the amusement of his vacant hours. This is the period, he used to say, in which the foundations of all female goodness are to be laid, since so soon after fourteen they leap into women. The dead languages he aimed not to teach her; lest he should overload her young mind: but in the Italian and French he made her an adept.

Nor were the advantages common ones which she received from his lady, her grandmother, and from her aunt Selby, her father's sister, a woman of equal worthiness. Her grandmother particularly is one of the most pious, yet most cheerful, of women. She will not permit her daughter Byron, she says, to live with her, for *both* their sakes. For the *girl's* sake, because there is a greater resort of company at Mr. Selby's, than at Shirley manor; and she is afraid, as her grandchild has a serious turn, that *her* own contemplative life may make her more grave

than she wishes so young a woman to be. Youth, she says, is the season for cheerfulness. For *her own* sake, because she looks upon her Harriet's company as a cordial too rich to be always at hand; and when she has a mind to regale, she will either send for her, fetch her, or visit her at Mrs. Selby's. One of her letters to Mrs. Selby I once saw. It ran thus—"You must spare me my Harriet. I am in pain. My spirits are not high. I would not have the undecayed mind yield, for want of using the means, to the decaying body. *One* happy day with our child, the true child of the united minds of her late excellent parents, will, I hope, effect the cure: if it do not, you must spare her to me *two*."

Did I not tell you, madam, that it was very difficult to describe the person *only* of this admirable young lady? But I stop here. A horrid apprehension comes across me! How do I know but I am praising another man's *future* wife, and not my own? Here is a cousin of hers, a Mrs. Reeves, a fine lady from London, come down under the cursed influence of my evil stars, to carry this Harriet away with her into the gay world. Woman! woman!—I beg your ladyship's pardon; but what angel of twenty is proof against vanity? The first hour she appears, she will be a toast; stars and titles will crowd about her; and who knows how far a paltry coronet may dazzle *her* who deserves an imperial crown? But, woe to the man, whoever he be, whose pretensions dare to interfere (and have any assurance of success) with those of

Your ladyship's
Most obedient and faithful servant,
JOHN GREVILLE.

LETTER III.

MISS HARRIET BYRON TO MISS LUCY SELBY.

Selby-house, Jan. 16.

I RETURN you inclosed, my Lucy, Mr. Greville's strange letter. As you asked him for it, he will have no doubt but you shewed it to me. It is better therefore, if he make enquiry whether you did or not, to own it. In this case he will be curious to know my sentiments upon it. He is sensible that my whole heart is open to you.

Tell him, if you think proper, in so many words, that I am far more displeased with him for his impetuosity, than gratified by his flattery.

Tell him, that I think it very hard, that, when my nearest relations leave me so generously to my liberty, a man to whom I never gave cause to treat me with disrespect, should take upon himself to threaten and controul me.

Ask him, What are his pretences for following me to London, or elsewhere?

If I had not had reasons *before* to avoid a more than neighbourly civility to him, he has now furnished me with very strong ones. The threatening lover must certainly make a tyrant husband. Don't you think so, Lucy? But make not supposals of lover or husband to him: these bold men will turn shadows into substance in their own favour.

A woman who is so much exalted above what she *can* deserve, has reason to be terrified, were she to marry the complimenter (even *could* she suppose him so blinded by his passion as not to be absolutely insincere) to think of the height she must fall from in his opinion, when she has put it into his power to treat her but as what she is.

Indeed I both *despise* and *fear* a very high complimenter.—*Despise* him for his designing flattery, supposing him not to believe himself; or, if he *mean* what he says, for his injudiciousness. I *fear* him, lest he should (as in the former case he must hope) be able to raise a vanity in me, that would sink me beneath his meanness, and give him cause to triumph over my folly, at the very time that I am full of my own wisdom.

High-strained compliments, in short, always pull me down; always make me shrink into *myself*. Have I not some vanity to guard against? I have no doubt but Mr. Greville wished I should see this letter: and this gives me some little indignation against *myself*; for does it not look as if, from some faults in my conduct, Mr. Greville had formed hopes of succeeding by treating me like a fool?

I hope these gentlemen will not follow me to town, as they threaten. If they do, I will not see them, if I can any way avoid it. Yet, for me to appear to *them* solicitous on this head, or to desire them *not* to go, will be in some measure to lay myself under an obligation to their acquiescence. It is not therefore for me to hope to influence them in this matter, since they expect too much in return for it from me; and since they will be ready to found a merit in their passion even for disobliging me.

I cannot bear, however, to think of their dangling after me wherever I go. These men, my dear, were we to give them importance with us, would be greater infringers of our natural freedom than the most severe parents; and for *their own sakes:* whereas parents, if ever so despotic (if not unnatural ones indeed) mean *solely our good*, though headstrong girls do not always think so. Yet such, even *such* can be teazed out of their wills, at least out of their duty, by the men who stile themselves *lovers*, when

they are invincible to all the entreaties and commands of their *parents*.

O that the next eight or ten years of my life, if I find not in the interim a man on whom my whole undivided heart can fix, were happily over! *As* happily as the last alike important four years! To be able to look down from the *elevation* of thirty years, my principles fixed, and to have no capital folly to reproach myself with, what a happiness would that be!

My cousin Reeves's time of setting out holds; the indulgence of my dearest friends continues; and my resolution holds. But I will see my Nancy before I set out. What! shall I enter upon a party of pleasure, and leave in my heart room to reflect, in the midst of it, that there is a dear suffering friend who had reason to think I was afraid of giving myself pain, when I might, by the balm of true love and friendly soothings, administer comfort to her wounded heart?—No, my Lucy, believe me, if I have not generosity enough, I have *selfishness* enough, to make me avoid a sting so severe as *this* would be, to your

HARRIET BYRON.

LETTER IV.

MISS BYRON TO MISS SELBY.

Grosvenor-street, Tuesday, Jan. 24.

We are just arrived. We had a very agreeable journey.

I need not tell you that Mr. Greville and Mr. Fenwick attended us to our first baiting; and had a genteel dinner ready provided for us: the gentleman will tell you this, and all particulars.

They both renewed their menaces of following me to London, if I staid above one month. They were so good as to stretch their fortnight to a month.

Mr. Fenwick, in very pathetic terms, as he found an opportunity to engage me alone for a few minutes, besought me to *love* him. Mr. Greville was as earnest with me to declare that I *hated* him. Such a declaration, he said, was all he at present wished for. It was strange, he told me, that he could neither prevail on me to encourage his love, nor to declare my hatred. He is a whimsical creature.

I raillied him with my usual freedom; and told him, that if there were one person in the world that I was capable of hating, I could make the less scruple to oblige *him*. He thanked me for that.

The two gentlemen would fain have proceeded farther: but as they are never out of their way, I dare say, they would have gone to London; and there have dangled on till we should not have got rid of them, for my whole time of being in town.

I was very gravely earnest with them to leave us, when we stept into the coach in order to proceed. Fenwick, you dog, said Mr. Greville, we *must* return; Miss Byron looks grave. Gravity, and a rising colour in the finest face in the world, indicate as much as the frowns of other beauties. And in the most respectful manner they both took leave of me; insisting, however, on my hand, and that I would wish them well.

I gave each my hand; I wish you very well, gentlemen, said I: and I am obliged to your civility in seeing me so far on my journey: especially as you are so kind as to leave me here.

Why, dear madam, did you not spare your *especially*, said Mr. Greville?—Come, Fenwick, let us retire, and lay our two loggerheads together, and live over again the past hour, and then hang ourselves.

Poor Mr. Orme! The coach, at our first setting

out, passed by his park-gate, you know. There was he—on the very ridge of the highway. I saw him not till it was near him. He bowed to the very ground, with *such* an air of disconsolateness!—Poor Mr. Orme!—I wished to have said one word to him, when we had passed him: but the coach flew—Why did the coach fly!—But I waved my hand, and leaned out of the coach as far as I could, and bowed to him.

O Miss Byron, said Mrs. Reeves (so said Mr. Reeves) Mr. Orme is the happy man.

Did I think as you do, I should not be so desirous to have spoken to him: but, methinks, I should have been glad to have once said, Adieu, Mr. Orme; for Mr. Orme is a good man.

But, Lucy, my heart was softened at parting with my dear relations and friends; and when the heart is softened, light impressions will go deep.

My cousins' house is suitable to their fortune: very handsome, and furnished in taste. Mrs. Reeves, knowing well what a scribbler I am, and am expected to be, has provided me with pen, ink, and paper, in abundance. She readily allowed me to take early possession of my apartment, that I might pay punctual obedience to the commands of all my friends on setting out. These, you know, were, to write in the first hour of my arrival: and it was allowed to be to you, my dear. But, writing thus early, what can have occurred?

My apartment is extremely elegant. A well-furnished book-case is, however, to me the most attracting ornament in it—Pardon me, dear pen and ink! I must not prefer any thing to you, by whose means I hope to spend some part of every day at Selby-house; and even at this distance amuse with my prattle those friends that are always so partial to it.

And now, my dear, my revered grandmamma, I ask your blessing—yours, my ever-indulgent aunt Selby—and yours, my honoured and equally beloved uncle Selby. Who knows but you will now in absence take less delight in teazing your ever-dutiful Harriet? But yet I unbespeak not my monitor.

Continue to love me, my Lucy, as I shall endeavour to deserve your love: and let me know how our dear Nancy does.

My heart bleeds for her. I should have held myself utterly inexcusable, had I accepted of your kindly intended dispensation, and come to town for three whole months, without repeating to her, by word of mouth, my love and my sympathizing concern for her. What merit does her patience add to her other merits! How has her calamity endeared her to me! If ever I shall be heavily afflicted, God give me her amiable, her almost meritorious patience in sufferings!

To my cousin Holles's, and all my other relations, friends, companions, make the affectionate compliments of your

HARRIET BYRON.

LETTER V.

MISS BYRON, TO MISS SELBY.

Jan. 25.

You rejoice me, my dear, in the hopes which, you tell me, Dr. Mitchell from London gives you in relation to our Nancy. May our incessant prayers for the restoration of her health be answered!

Three things my aunt Selby, and you, in the name of every one of my friends, injoined me at parting. The *first*, To write often, *very* often, were *your* words. This injunction was not needful: my

heart is with you; and the good news you give me of my grandmamma's health, and of our Nancy, enlarges that heart. The *second,* To give you a description of the persons and characters of the people I am likely to be conversant with in this great town. And, *thirdly,* Besides the general account which you all expected from me of the visits I made and received, you injoined me to acquaint you with the very *beginnings* of every address (and even of every *silent and respectful* distinction, were *your* words) that the girl whom you all so greatly favour, might receive on this excursion to town.

Don't you remember what my uncle Selby answered to this?—*I* do: and will repeat it, to shew, that his correcting cautions shall not be forgotten.

The vanity of the sex, said he, will not suffer any thing of this sort to escape our Harriet. Women make themselves so cheap at the public places in and about town, that new faces are more enquired after than even fine faces constantly seen. Harriet has an honest artless bloom in her cheeks; she may attract notice as a novice: but wherefore do you fill her head with an expectation of conquests? Women, added he, offer themselves at every public place, in rows, as at a market. Because three or four silly fellows here in the country (like people at an auction, who raise the price upon each other above its value) have bid for her, you think she will not be able to set her foot out of doors, without increasing the number of her followers.

And then my uncle would have it, that my head would be unable to bear the *consequence* which the partiality of my other friends gave me.

It is true, my Lucy, that we young women are too apt to be pleased with the admiration *pretended* for us by the other sex. But I have always endeavoured to keep down any foolish pride of this sort,

by such considerations as these: that flattery is the vice of men: that they seek to raise us in order to lower us, and in the end to exalt themselves on the ruins of the pride they either hope to find, or inspire: that humility, as it shines brightest in a high condition, best becomes a flattered woman of all women: that she who is puffed up by the praises of men, on the supposed advantages of person, answers *their end* upon her; and seems to own, that she thinks it a principal part of *hers*, to be admired by them: and what can give more importance to them, and less to herself, than this? For have not women souls as well as men, and souls as capable of the noblest attainments, as theirs? Shall they not therefore be most solicitous to cultivate the beauties of the mind, and to make those of person but of inferior consideration? The bloom of beauty holds but a very few years; and shall not a woman aim to make herself mistress of those perfections that will dignify her advanced age? And then may she be as wise, as venerable—as my grandmamma. *She* is an example for us, my dear: who is so much respected, who is so much beloved, both by old and young, as my grandmamma Shirley?

In pursuance of the second injunction, I will now describe some young ladies and gentlemen who paid my cousins their compliments on their arrival in town.

Miss Allestree, daughter of Sir John Allestree, was one. She is very pretty, and very genteel, easy, and free. I believe I shall love her.

Miss Bramber was the second. Not so pretty as Miss Allestree; but agreeable in her person and air. A little too talkative, I think.

It was one of my grandfather's rules to me, not impertinently to start subjects, as if I would make an ostentation of knowledge; or as if I were fond

of indulging a talking humour: but frankness and complaisance required, he used to say, that we women should unlock our bosoms, when we were called upon, and were expected to give our sentiments upon any subject.

Miss Bramber was *eager* to talk. She seemed, even when silent, to look as if she was studying for something to say, although she had exhausted two or three subjects. This charge of volubility, I am the rather inclined to fix upon her, as neither Mr. nor Mrs. Reeves took notice to me of it, as a thing extraordinary; which, probably, they would have done, if she had exceeded her usual way. And yet, perhaps, the joy of seeing her newly arrived friends might have opened her lips. If so, your pardon, sweet Miss Bramber!

Miss Sally, her younger sister, is very amiable and very modest: a little kept down, as it seems, by the vivacity of her elder sister; between whose ages there are about six or seven years: so that Miss Bramber seems to regard her sister as one whom she is willing to remember as the *girl* she was two or three years ago; for Miss Sally is not above seventeen.

What confirmed me in this, was, that the younger lady was a good deal more free when her sister was withdrawn, than when she was present; and again pursed-up her really pretty mouth when she returned: and her sister addressed her always by the word *child*, with an air of eldership; while the other called her *sister*, with a look of observance.

These were the ladies.

The two gentlemen who came with them, were, Mr. Barnet, a nephew of Lady Allestree, and Mr. Somner.

Mr. Somner is a young gentlemen lately married: very affected, and very opinionated. I told Mrs.

Reeves, after he was gone, that I believed he was a dear lover of his person; and she owned he was. Yet had he no great reason for it. It is far from extraordinary; though he was very gaily dressed. His wife, it seems, was a young widow of great fortune; and till she gave him consequence by falling in love with him, he was thought to be a modest good sort of young man; one that had not discovered any more perfections in himself, than other people beheld in him; and this gave her an excuse for liking him. But now he is loquacious, forward, bold, thinks meanly of the sex; and, what is worse, not the higher of the lady, for the preference she has given him.

This gentleman took great notice of me; and yet in such a way, as to have me think, that the approbation of so excellent a judge as himself, did me no small honour.

Mr. Barnet is a young man, that I imagine will be always young. At first I thought him *only* a fop. He affected to say some things, that, though trite, were sententious, and carried with them the air of observation. There is some degree of merit in having such a memory, as will help a person to repeat and apply other men's wit with some tolerable propriety. But when he attempted to walk alone, he said things that it was impossible a man of common sense could say. I pronounce therefore boldly about *him:* yet by his outward appearance he may pass for one of your pretty fellows; for he dresses very gaily. Indeed if he has any taste, it is in dress; and this he has found out; for he talked of little else, when he *led* the talk; and boasted of several parts of *his*. What finished him with me, was, that as often as the conversation seemed to take a serious turn, he arose from his seat, and hummed an Italian air; of which however he knew nothing: but the sound of his own voice seemed to please him.

This fine gentleman recollected some high-flown compliments, and, applying them to me, looked as if he expected I should value myself upon them.

No wonder that men in general think meanly of us women, if they believe we have ears to hear, and folly to be pleased with, the frothy things that pass under the name of *compliments*, from such *random-shooters* as these.

Miss Stevens paid us a visit this afternoon. She is the daughter of Colonel Stevens, a very worthy man. She appears sensible and unaffected; has read, my cousin says, a good deal; and yet takes no pride in shewing it.

Miss Darlington came with her. They are related. This young lady has, I find, a pretty taste in poetry. Mrs. Reeves prevailed on her to shew us three of her performances. And now, as it was with some reluctance that she shewed them, is it fair to say any thing about them? I say it only to you, my friends.—One was *on the parting of two lovers*; very sensible; and so tender, that it shewed the fair writer knew how to describe the pangs that may be innocently allowed to arise on such an occasion.—One *on the morning-dawn*, and sun-rise; a subject that gave credit to herself; for she is, it seems, a very early riser. I petitioned for a copy of this, for the sake of two or three of my dear cousins, as well as to confirm my own practice; but I was modestly refused.—The third was on the death of a favourite linnet; a little too pathetic for the occasion; since were Miss Darlington to have lost her best and dearest friend, I imagine she had in this piece, which is pretty long, exhausted the subject; and must borrow from it some of the images which she introduces to heighten her distress for the loss of the little songster. It is a very difficult matter, I believe, for young persons of genius to rein-in their 'imagina-

tions. A great flow of spirits, and great store of images crowding in upon them, carry them too frequently above their subject; and they are apt rather to say all that *may* be said on their favourite topics, than what is *proper* to be said. But it is a pretty piece, however.

Thursday morning.

LADY Betty Williams supped with us the same evening. She is an agreeable woman, the widow of a very worthy man, a near relation of Mr. Reeves. She has a great and just regard for my cousin, and consults him in all affairs of importance. She seems to be turned of forty; has a son and a daughter; but they are both abroad for education.

It hurt me to hear her declare, that she cared not for the trouble of education; and that she had this pleasure, which girls brought up at home seldom give their mothers; that she and Miss Williams always saw each other, and always parted, as lovers.

Surely there must be some fault either in the temper of the mother, or in the behaviour of the daughter; and if so, I doubt it will not be amended by seeing each other but seldom. Do not lovers thus cheat and impose upon one another?

The young gentleman is about seventeen; his sister about fifteen: and, as I understand she is a very lively, and, 'tis feared, a forward girl, shall we wonder, if in a few years time she should make such a choice for her husband as Lady Betty would least of all choose for a son-in-law? What influence can a mother expect to have over a daughter from whom she so voluntarily estranges herself? and from whose example the daughter can receive only hearsay benefits?

But after all, methinks I hear my correcting uncle ask, May not lady Betty have *better* reasons for

her conduct in this particular, than she gave you?— She may, my uncle, and I hope she has: but I wish she had condescended to give those better reasons, since she gave any; and then you had not been troubled with the impertinent remarks of your saucy niece.

Lady Betty was so kind as to take great notice of me. She desired to be one in every party of pleasure that I am to be engaged in. Persons who were often at public places, she observed, took as much delight in accompanying strangers to them, as if they were their own. The apt comparisons, she said; the new remarks; the pretty wonder; the agreeable passions excited in such, on the occasion; always gave her high entertainment: and she was sure from the observation of *such* a young lady, civilly bowing to me, she should be equally delighted and improved. I bowed in silence. I love not to make disqualifying speeches; by such we seem to intimate that we believe the complimenter to be in earnest, or perhaps that we think the compliment our due, and want to hear it either repeated or confirmed; and yet, possibly, we have not that pretty confusion, and those transient blushes, ready, which Mr. Greville archly says are always to be at hand when we affect to disclaim the praises given us.

Lady Betty was so good as to stop there; though the muscles of her agreeable face shewed a polite promptitude, had I, by disclaiming her compliments, provoked them to perform their office.

Am I not a saucy creature?

I know I am. But I dislike not Lady Betty, for all that.

I am to be carried by her to a masquerade, to a ridotto; when the season comes, to Ranelagh and Vauxhall: in the mean time, to balls, routs, drums, and-so-forth; and to qualify me for these latter, I

am to be taught all the fashionable games. Did my dear grandmamma, twenty or thirty years ago, think she should live to be told, that to the dancing-master, the singing or music-master, the high mode would require the gaming-master to be added for the completing of the female education?

Lady Betty will kindly take the lead in all these diversions.

And now, Lucy, will you not repeat your wishes, that I return to you with a sound heart? And are you not afraid that I shall become a modern fine lady? As to the latter fear, I will tell you *when* you shall suspect me—If you find that I prefer the highest of these entertainments, or the opera itself, well as I love music, to a good play of our favourite Shakespeare, then, my Lucy, let your heart ake for your Harriet: then, be apprehensive that she is laid hold on by levity; that she is captivated by the eye and the ear; that her heart is infected by the modern taste; and that she will carry down with her an appetite to pernicious gaming; and, in order to support her extravagance, will think of punishing some honest man in marriage.

James has signified to Sally his wishes to be allowed to return to Selby-house. I have not therefore bought him the new liveries I designed for him on coming to town. I cannot bear an uncheerful brow in a servant; and he owning to me, on my talking with him, his desire to return, I have promised that he *shall*, as soon as Mr. Reeves has provided me with another servant.—Silly fellow! But I hope my aunt will not dismiss him upon it. The servant I may hire, may not care to go into the country perhaps, or may not so behave, as that I should choose to take him down with me. And James is honest; and his mother would break her heart, if he should be dismissed our service.

Several servants have already offered themselves: but, as I think people are answerable for the character of such as they choose for their domestics, I find no small difficulty in fixing. I am not of the mind of that great man, whose good-natured reason for sometimes preferring men no way deserving, was, that he loved to be a friend to those whom no other person would befriend. This was carrying his goodness very far (if he made it not an excuse for himself, for having promoted a man who *proved* bad *afterwards*, rather than as supposing him to be so at the *time*); since else, he seemed not to consider, that every bad man he promoted, ran away with the reward due to a better.

Mr. and Mrs. Reeves are so kind to me, and their servants are so ready to oblige me, that I shall not be very uneasy, if I cannot soon get one to my mind. Only if I could fix on such a one, and if my grandmamma's Oliver should leave her, as she supposes he will, now he has married Ellen, as soon as a good inn offers, James may supply Oliver's place, and the new servant may continue mine instead of James.

And now that I have gone so low, don't you wish me to put an end to this letter?—I believe you do.

Well then, with duty and love ever remembered where so justly due, believe me to be, my dear Lucy,

Your truly affectionate

HARRIET BYRON.

I will write separately to what you say of Mr. Greville, Mr. Fenwick, and Miss Orme; yet hope to be time enough for the post.

LETTER VI.

MISS BYRON TO MISS SELBY.

Sat. Jan. 28.

As to what you say of Mr. Greville's concern on my absence (and, I think, with a little too much feeling for him) and of his declaring himself unable to live without seeing me; I have but one fear about it; which is, that he is forming a pretence from his *violent* love, to come up after me: and if he does, I will not see him, if I can help it.

And do you indeed believe him to be so much in love? By your seriousness on the occasion, you seem to think he is. O my Lucy! What a good heart you have! And did he not weep when he told you so? Did he not turn his head away, and pull out his handkerchief!—O these dissemblers! The hyæna, my dear, was a *male* devourer. The men in malice, and to extenuate their own guilt, made the creature a *female*. And yet there may be male and female of this species of monsters. But as women have more to lose with regard to reputation than men, the male hyæna must be infinitely the more dangerous creature of the two; since he will come to us, even into our very houses, fawning, cringing, weeping, licking our hands; while the den of the female is by the highway-side, and wretched youths must enter into it, to put it in her power to devour them.

Let me tell you, my dear, that if there be an artful man in England, with regard to us women (artful equally in his free speaking, and in his sycophancies) Mr. Greville is the man: and he *intends* to be so too, and values himself upon his art. Does he not as boldly as constantly, insinuate, that flattery is dearer to a woman than her food? Yet who so

gross a flatterer as himself, when the humour is upon him? And yet at times he wants to build up a merit for sincerity or plain-dealing, by saying free things.

It is not difficult, my dear, to find out these men, were we earnest to detect them. Their chief strength lies in our weakness. But however weak we are, I think we should not add to the triumph of those who make our weakness the general subject of their satire. We should not prove the justice of their ridicule by our own indiscretions. But the traitor is within us. If we guard against ourselves, we may bid defiance to all the arts of man.

You know, that my great objection to Mr. Greville is for his immoralities. A man of free principles, shewn by practices as free, can hardly make a tender husband, were a woman able to get over considerations that she ought *not* to get over. Who shall trust for the performance of his *second* duties, the man who avowedly despises his *first*? Mr. Greville had a good education: he must have taken *pains* to render vain the pious precepts of his worthy father; and still more to make a jest of them.

Three of his women we have heard of, besides her whom he brought with him from Wales. You know he has only affected to appear decent since he has cast his eyes upon me. The man, my dear, must be an abandoned man, and must have a very hard heart, who can pass from woman to woman, without any remorse for a former, whom, as may be supposed, he has by the most solemn vows seduced. And whose leavings is it, my dear, that a virtuous woman takes, who marries a profligate?

Is it not reported that his Welshwoman, to whom, at parting, he gave not sufficient for a twelvemonth's scanty subsistence, is now upon the town? Vile man! He thinks it to his credit, I have heard, to own it a

seduction, and that she was not a vicious creature till he made her so.

One only merit has Mr. Greville to plead in this black transaction: it is, that he has, by his whole conduct in it, added a warning to our sex. And shall I, despising the warning, marry a man, who, specious as he is in his temper, and lively in his conversation, has shewn so bad a nature?

His fortune, as you say, is great. The more inexcusable therefore is he for his niggardliness to his Welshwoman. On his fortune he presumes: it will procure him a too easy forgiveness from others of our sex: but fortune without merit will never do with me, were the man a prince.

You say, that if a woman resolves not to marry till she finds herself addressed to by a man of strict virtue, she must be for ever single. If this be true, what wicked creatures are men? What a dreadful abuse of passions, given them for the noblest purposes, are they guilty of!

I have a very high notion of the marriage-state. I remember what my uncle once averred; that a woman out of wedlock is half useless to the end of her being. How indeed do the duties of a good wife, of a good mother, and a worthy matron, well performed, dignify a woman! Let my aunt Selby's example, in her enlarged sphere, set against that of any single woman of like years moving in her narrow circle, testify the truth of the observation. My grandfather used to say, that families are little communities; that there are but few solid friendships out of them; and that they help to make up worthily, and to secure, the great community, of which they are so many miniatures.

But yet it is my opinion, and I hope that I never by my practice shall discredit it, that a woman who, with her eyes open, marries a profligate man, had,

generally, much better remain single all her life; since it is very likely, that by such a step she defeats, as to herself, all the good ends of society. What a dreadful, what a *presumptuous* risque runs she, who marries a wicked man, even hoping to reclaim him, when she cannot be sure of keeping her own principles!—*Be not deceived; evil communication corrupts good manners;* is a caution truly apostolical.

The text you mention of the *unbelieving husband* being converted by the *believing wife,* respects, as I take it, the first ages of Christianity; and is an instruction to the converted wife to let her unconverted husband see in her behaviour to him, *while he beheld her chaste conversation coupled with fear,* the efficacy upon her own heart of the excellent doctrines she had embraced. It could not have in view the woman who, *being single*, chose a *pagan husband* in hopes of *converting him.* Nor can it give encouragement for a woman of virtue and religion to marry a profligate in hopes of *reclaiming* him. *Who can touch pitch, and not be defiled?*

As to Mr. Fenwick, I am far from having a better opinion of him than I have of Mr. Greville. You know what is whispered of him. He has more decency however: he *avows* not free principles, as the other does. But you must have observed how much he seems to enjoy the mad talk and free sentiments of the other: and that other always brightens up and rises in his freedoms and impiety on Mr. Fenwick's sly applauses and encouraging countenance. In a word, Mr. Fenwick, not having the same lively things to say, nor so lively an air to carry them off, as Mr. Greville has, though he would be thought not to want sense, takes pains to shew that he has as corrupt a heart. If I thought anger would not give him consequence, I should hardly forbear to shew myself displeased, when he points by

a leering eye, and by a broad smile, the free jest of the other, to the person present whom he thinks most apt to blush, as if for fear it should be lost; and still more, when on the modest cheek's shewing the sensibility of the person so insulted, he breaks out into a loud laugh, that she may not be able to recover herself.

Surely these men must think us women egregious hypocrites: they must believe that we only affect modesty, and in our hearts approve of their freedom: for, can it be supposed, that such as call themselves gentlemen, and who have had the education and opportunities that these two have had, would give themselves liberties of speech on *purpose* to affront us?

I hope I shall find the London gentlemen more polite than these our neighbours of the fox-chace: and yet hitherto I have seen no great cause to prefer them to the others. But about the court, and at the fashionable public places, I expect wonders. Pray Heaven, I may not be disappointed!

Thank Miss Orme, in my name, for the kind wishes she sends me. Tell her, that her doubts of my affection for her are not just; and that I do really and indeed love her. Nor should she want the most explicit declarations of my love, were I not more afraid of her in the character of a *sister* to a truly respectable man, than doubtful of her in that of a friend to me: in which latter light, I even joy to consider her. But she is a little naughty, tell her, because she is always leading to one subject. And yet, how can I be angry with her for it, if her good opinion of me induces her to think it in my power to make the brother happy, whom she so dearly and deservedly loves? I cannot but esteem her for the part she takes.—And this it is that makes me afraid of the artlessly-artful Miss Orme.

It would look as if I thought my duty, and love, and respects, were questionable, if in every letter I repeated them to my equally honoured and beloved benefactors, friends, and favourers. Suppose them therefore always included in my subscription to you, my Lucy, when I tell you that I am, and will be,

Your ever-affectionate
HARRIET BYRON.

LETTER VII.

MR. SELBY TO MISS BYRON.

Selby-house, Jan. 30.

WELL! and now there wants but a London lover or two to enter upon the stage, and *Vanity-Fair* will be proclaimed, and directly opened. Greville every where magnifying you in order to justify his flame for you: Fenwick exalting you above all women: Orme adoring you, and by his humble silence saying more than any of them: proposals besides from this man: letters from that! What scenes of flattery and nonsense have I been witness to for these past three years and half, that young Mr. Elford began the dance? Single! Well may you have remained single till this your twentieth year, when you have such choice of admirers, that you don't know which to have. So in a mercer's shop, the tradesman has a fine time with you women; when variety of his rich wares distract you; and fifty to one at last, but as well in *men* as *silks*, you choose the worst, especially if the best is offered at first, and refused. For women know better how to be sorry, than to amend.

" It is true, say you, that we young women are

apt to be pleased with admiration —" Oh ho! Are you so? And so I have gained one point with you at last; have I?

"But I have always endeavoured" [And I, Harriet, wish you had succeeded in your endeavours] "to keep down any foolish pride"—Then you own that pride you have?—Another point gained! Conscience, honest conscience, *will* now-and-then make you women speak out. But now I think of it, here is vanity in the very humility. Well say you *endeavoured*, when female pride, like love, though hid under a barrel, will flame out at the bung.

Well, said I, to your aunt Selby, to your grand-mamma, and to your cousin Lucy, when we all met to sit in judgment upon your letters, now I hope you'll never dispute with me more on this flagrant love of admiration which I have so often observed swallows up the hearts and souls of you all; since your Harriet is not exempt from it; and since with all her speciousness, with all her prudence, with all her caution, she (taken with a qualm of conscience) owns it.

But, no, truly! All is right that you *say*: all is right that you *do!*—Your very confessions are brought as so many demonstrations of your diffidence, of your ingenuousness, and I cannot tell what.

Why, I must own, that no father ever loved his daughter as I love my niece: but yet, girl, your faults, your vanities, I do not love. It is my glory, that I think myself able to judge of my friends as they *deserve*; not as being *my* friends. Why, the best beloved of my heart, your aunt herself—you know, I value her now more, now less, as she deserves. But with all those I have named, and with all your relations, indeed, their Harriet cannot be in fault. And why? Because you are related to *them*; and because they attribute to themselves some merit

from the relation they stand in to you. *Supererogatorians* all of them (*I will* make words whenever I please) with their *attributions* to you; and because you are of their sex, forsooth; and because I accuse you in a point in which you are all concerned, and so make a common cause of it.

Here one exalts you for your *good sense;* because you have a knack, by help of a happy memory, of making every thing you read, and every thing that is told you, that you like, your own (your grandfather's precepts particularly); and because, I think, you pass upon us as your own what you have borrowed, if not stolen.

Another praises you for your *good-nature*—The deuce is in it, if a girl who has crowds of admirers after her, and a new lover wherever she shews her bewitching face; who is blest with health and spirits; and has every-body for her friend, let her deserve it or not; can be *ill*-natured. Who can such a one have to quarrel with, trow?

Another extols you for your *cheerful wit*, even when displayed, bold girl as you are, upon your uncle; in which indeed you are upheld by the wife of my bosom, whenever I take upon me to tell you what ye all, even the best of ye, are.

Yet sometimes they praise your *modesty:* and *why* your modesty?—Because you have a skin in a manner transparent; and because you can blush —I was going to say, whenever you please.

At other times, they will find out, that you have features equally delicate and regular; when I think, and I have examined them jointly and separately, that all your *takingness* is owing to that open and cheerful countenance, which gives them a gloss (or what shall I call it?) that we men are apt to be pleased with at first sight. A gloss that takes one, as it were, by surprize. But give me the beauty that

grows upon us every time we see it; that leaves room for something to be found out to its advantage, as we are more and more acquainted with it.

"Your correcting uncle," you call me. And so I will be. But what hope have I of your amendment, when every living soul, man, woman, and child, that knows you, puffs you up? There goes Mr. Selby! I have heard strangers say—And who is Mr. Selby? another stranger has asked—Why, Mr. Selby is uncle to the celebrated Miss Byron.—Yet I, who have lived fifty years in this county, should think I might be known on my *own* account, and not as the *uncle* of a girl of twenty.

"Am I not a saucy creature?" in another place you ask. And you answer, "I know I am." I am glad you do. Now may I call you so by your own authority, I hope. But with your aunt, it is only the effect of your *agreeable* vivacity. What abominable partiality! E'en do what you will, Harriet, you'll never be in fault. I could almost wish—But I won't tell you what I wish neither. But something must betide you, that you little think of; depend upon that. All your days cannot be halcyon ones. I would give a thousand pounds with all my soul, to see you heartily love: ay, up to the very ears, and unable to help yourself! You are not *thirty* yet, child: and, indeed, you seem to *think* the time of danger is *not over*. I am glad of your *cousciousness*, my dear. Shall I tell Greville of your doubts, and of your difficulties, Harriet? As to the ten *coming* years, I mean? And shall I tell him of your prayer to pass them safely?—But is not this wish of yours, that ten years of bloom were overpast, and that you were arrived at the thirtieth year of your age, a very singular one?—A flight! a mere flight! Ask ninety-nine of your sex out of an hundred, if they would adopt it.

In another letter you ask Lucy, "If Mr. Greville has not said, that flattery is dearer to a woman than her food." Well niece, and what would you be at? Is it not so?—I do aver, that Mr. Greville is a sensible man; and makes good observations.

"Men's chief strength, you say, lies in the weakness of women." Why so it does. Where else should it lie? And this from their immeasurable love of admiration and flattery, as here you seem to acknowledge of your own accord, though it has been so often perversely disputed with me. Give you women but rope enough, you'll do your own business.

However, in many places you have pleased me: but no-where more than when you recollect my *averment* (without contradicting it; which is a rarity!) "that a woman out of wedlock is half useless to the end of her being." Good girl! That was an assertion of mine, and I will abide by it. Lucy simpered when we came to this place, and looked at me. She expected, I saw, my notice upon it; so did your aunt: but the confession was so frank, that I was generous; and only said, True as the gospel.

I have written a long letter: yet have not said one quarter of what I intended to say when I began. You will allow that you have given your *correcting* uncle, ample subject. But you fare something the better for saying, "you unbespeak not your monitor."

You *own* that you have some vanity. Be more free in your acknowledgments of this nature (you *may*; for are you not a woman?) and you'll fare something the better for your ingenuousness; and the rather, as your acknowledgment will help me up with your aunt and Lucy, and your grandmamma, in an argument I will not give up.

I have had fresh applications made to me—But I will not say from whom: since we have agreed long ago not to prescribe to so discreet a girl, as in the main we all think you, in the articles of love and marriage.

With all your faults I must love you. I am half ashamed to say how much I miss you already. We are all naturally cheerful folks: yet, I don't know how it is; your absence has made a strange chasm at our table. Let us hear from you every post: that will be something. Your doting aunt tells the hours on the day she expects a letter. Your grandmother is at present with us, and in heart I am sure regrets your absence: but as your tenderness to her has kept you from going to London for so many years, she thinks she ought to be easy. Her example goes a great way with us all, you know; and particularly with

Your truly affectionate
(though *correcting*) uncle,
GEO. SELBY.

LETTER VIII.

MISS BYRON TO MISS SELBY.

Tuesday, January 31.

I AM already, my dear Lucy, quite contrary to my own expectation, enabled to obey the third general injunction laid upon me at parting, by you, and all my dear friends; since a gentleman, not inconsiderable in his family or fortune, has already beheld your Harriet with partiality.

Not to heighten your impatience by unnecessary parade, his name is *Fowler*. He is a young gentleman of an handsome independent fortune, and still larger expectations from a Welsh uncle now in town, Sir Rowland Meredith, knighted in his sheriffalty,

on occasion of an address which he brought up to the king from his county.

Sir Rowland, it seems, requires from his nephew, on pain of forfeiting his favour for ever, that he marries not without his approbation: which, he declares, he never will give, except the woman be of a good family; has a gentlewoman's fortune; has had the benefit of a religious education; which he considers as the best security that can be given for her good behaviour as a wife, and as a *mother;* so forward does the good knight look! Her character unsullied: acquainted with the theory of the domestic duties, and not ashamed, occasionally, to enter into the direction of the practice. Her fortune, however, as his nephew will have a good one, he declares to be the least thing he stands upon; only that he would have her possessed of from six to ten thousand pounds, that it may not appear to be a match of mere love, and as if his nephew were *taken in,* as he calls it, rather by the eyes than by the understanding. Where a woman can have such a fortune given her by her family, though no greater, it will be an earnest, he says, that the family she is of have *worth,* as he calls it, and want not to owe obligations to that of the man she marries.

Something particular, something that has the look of forecast and prudence, you'll say, in the old knight.

O but I had like to have forgot; his future niece must also be handsome. He values himself, it seems, upon the breed of his horses and dogs, and makes polite comparisons between the *more* noble, and the *less* noble animals.

Sir Rowland himself, as you will guess by his particularity, is an old bachelor, and one who wants to have a woman made on purpose for his nephew; and who positively insists upon qualities, before he

knows her, not one of which, perhaps, his future niece will have.

Don't you remember Mr. Tolson, of Derbyshire? he was determined never to marry a widow. If he did, it should be one who had a vast fortune, and who never had a child. And he had still a more particular exception; and that was to a woman who had red hair. He held his exceptions till he was forty; and then being looked upon as a determined bachelor, no family thought it worth their while to make proposals to him; no woman to throw out a net for him (to express myself in the stile of the gay Mr. Greville); and he at last fell in with, and married, the laughing Mrs. Turner: a widow, who had little or no fortune, had one child, a daughter, living, and that child an absolute idiot; and, to complete the perverseness of his fate, her hair not only red, but the most disagreeable of reds. The honest man was grown splenetic: disregarded by every body, he was become disregardful of himself: he hoped for a cure of his gloominess, from her cheerful vein; and seemed to think himself under obligation to one who had taken notice of him, when nobody else would. Bachelors' wives! Maids' children! These old saws always mean something.

Mr. Fowler saw me at my cousin Reeves's the first time. I cannot say he is disagreeable in his *person*: but he seems to want the *mind* I would have a man blessed with, to whom I am to vow love and honour. I purpose, whenever I marry, to make a very good and even a dutiful wife [must I not vow obedience? and shall I break my marriage-vow?]: I would not, therefore, on any consideration, marry a man, whose want of knowledge might make me stagger in the performance of my duty to him; and who would perhaps command from caprice, or want of understanding, what I should think unreasonable

to be complied with. There is a pleasure and a credit in yielding up even one's judgment in things indifferent, to a man who is older and wiser than one's self: but we are apt to doubt in one of a contrary character, what in the other we should have no doubt about: and doubt, you know, of a person's merit, is the first step to disrespect: and what, but disobedience, which lets in every evil, is the next?

I saw instantly that Mr. Fowler beheld me with a distinguished regard. We women, you know [let me for once be aforehand with my uncle] are very quick in making discoveries of this nature. But every-body at table saw it. He came again next day, and besought Mr. Reeves to give him his interest with me, without asking any questions about my fortune; though he was even generously particular as to his own. He might, since he has an unexceptionable one. Who is it in these cases that forgets to set foremost the advantages by which he is distinguished? While fortune is the last thing talked of by him who has little or none: and then *Love, love, love*, is all his cry.

Mr. Reeves, who has a good opinion of Mr. Fowler, in answer to his enquiries, told him, that he believed I was disengaged in my affections: Mr. Fowler rejoiced at that. That I had no questions to ask; but those of duty; which indeed, he said, was a stronger tie with me than interest. He praised my temper, and my frankness of heart; the latter at the expence of my sex; for which I least thanked him, when he told me what he had said. In short, he acquainted him with every thing that was necessary, and more than was necessary for him to know, of the favour of my family, and of my good Mr. Deane, in referring all proposals of this kind to myself; mingling the detail with commendations, which only could be excused by the

goodness of his own heart, and accounted for by his partiality to his cousin.

Mr. Fowler expressed great apprehensions on my cousin's talking of these references of my grandmother, aunt, and Mr. Deane, to myself, on occasions of this nature; which, he said, he presumed had been too frequent for his hopes.

If you have any hope, Mr. Fowler, said Mr. Reeves, it must be in your good character; and that much preferably to your clear estate and great expectations. Although she takes no pride in the number of her admirers, yet it is natural to suppose, that it has made her more difficult; and her difficulties are enhanced, in proportion to the generous confidence which all her friends have in her discretion. And when I told him, proceeded Mr. Reeves, that your fortune exceeded greatly what Sir Rowland required in a wife for him; and that you had, as well from inclination, as education, a serious turn: Too much, too much, in one person, cried he out. As to fortune, he wished you had not a shilling; and if he could obtain your favour, he should be the happiest man in the world.

O my good Mr. Reeves, said I, how have you over-rated my merits! Surely, you have not given Mr. Fowler your interest? If you *have*, should you not, for *his* sake, have known something of my mind before you had set me out thus, had I even deserved your high opinion?—Mr. Fowler might have reason to repent the double well-meant kindness of his friend, if men in these days were used to break their hearts for love.

It is the language I do and must talk of you in, to every-body, returned Mr. Reeves: is it not the language that those most talk who know you best?

Where the world is inclined to favour, replied I, it is apt to *over*-rate, as much as it will *under*-rate where it disfavours. In this case, you should not

have proceeded so far as to engage a gentleman's hopes. What may be the end of all this, but to make a compassionate nature, as mine has been thought to be, if Mr. Fowler should be greatly in earnest, uneasy to itself, in being obliged to shew pity, where she cannot return love?

What I have said, I have said, replied Mr. Reeves. Pity is but one remove from love. Mrs. Reeves (there she sits) was first brought to pity me; for never was man more madly in love than I; and then I thought myself sure of her. And so it proved. I can tell you I am no enemy to Mr. Fowler.

And so, my dear, Mr. Fowler seems to think he has met with a woman who would make a fit wife for him: but your Harriet, I doubt, has not in Mr. Fowler met with a man whom she can think a fit husband for her.

The very next morning, Sir Rowland himself—*

But now, my Lucy, if I proceed to tell you all the fine things that are said *of* me, and *to* me, what will my uncle Selby say? Will he not attribute all I shall repeat of this sort, to that pride, to that vanity, to that fondness of admiration, which he, as well as Mr. Greville, is continually charging upon all our sex?

Yet he expects that I shall give a minute account of every thing that passes, and of every conversation in which I have any part. How shall I do to please him? And yet I know I shall *best* please him, if I give him room to find fault with me. But then should he for my faults blame the whole sex? Is that just?

You will tell me, I know, that if I give speeches and conversations, I ought to give them justly: that the humours and characters of persons cannot be known unless I repeat *what* they say, and their *manner* of saying: that I must leave it to the

speakers and complimenters to answer for the likeness of the pictures they draw: that I know best my own heart, and whether I am puffed up by the praises given me: that if I *am*, I shall discover it by my superciliousness; and be enough punished on the discovery, by incurring, from those I love, deserved blame, if not contempt, instead of preserving their wished-for esteem.—Let me add to all this, that there is an author (I forget who) who says, "It is lawful to repeat those things, though spoken in our praise, that are necessary to be known, and cannot otherwise be come at."

And now let me ask, Will this preamble do, once for all?

It will. And so says my aunt Selby. And so says every one but my uncle. Well then I will proceed, and repeat all that shall be said, and that as well to my disadvantage as advantage; only resolving not to be exalted with the one, and to do my endeavour to amend by the other. And here, pray tell my uncle, that I do not desire he will spare me; since the faults he shall find in his Harriet shall always put her upon her guard—Not, however, to conceal them from his discerning eye; but to amend them.

And now, having, as I said, once for all, prepared you to guard against a surfeit of self-praise, though delivered at second or third hand, I will go on with my narrative—But hold—my paper reminds me that I have written a monstrous letter—I will therefore, with a new sheet, begin a new one. Only adding to this, that I am, and ever will be,

Your affectionate

HARRIET BYRON.

P. S. Well, but what shall I do now?—I have just received my uncle's letter. And, after his charge upon me of vanity and pride, will my parade, as above, stand me in any stead?—I must trust to

it. Only one word to my dear and ever-honoured uncle—Don't you, Sir, impute to me a belief of the truth of those extravagant compliments made by men professing love to me; and I will not wish you to think me one bit the wiser, the handsomer, the better, for them, than I was before.

LETTER IX.

MISS BYRON. IN CONTINUATION.

Thursday, February 2.

THE very next morning Sir Rowland himself paid his respects to Mr. Reeves.

The knight, before he would open himself very freely as to the business he came upon, desired that he might have an opportunity to see me. I knew nothing of him, nor of his business. We were just going to breakfast. Miss Allestree, Miss Bramber, and Miss Dolyns, a young lady of merit, were with us.

Just as we had taken our seats, Mr. Reeves introduced Sir Rowland, but let him not know which was Miss Byron. He did nothing at first sitting down, but peer in our faces by turns; and fixing his eye upon Miss Allestree, he jogged Mr. Reeves with his elbow—Hay, Sir?—audibly whispered he.

Mr. Reeves was silent. Sir Rowland, who is short-sighted, then looked under his bent brows, at Miss Bramber; then at Miss Dolyns; and then at me—Hay, Sir? whispered he again.

He sat out the first dish of tea with an impatience equal, as it seemed, to his uncertainty. And at last taking Mr. Reeves by one of his buttons, desired a word with him. They withdrew together; and the knight, not quitting hold of Mr. Reeves's button, Ad's-my-life, Sir, said he, I hope I am right. I love my nephew as I love myself. I live but for him. He

ever was dutiful to me his uncle. If that be Miss Byron who sits on the right-hand of your lady, with the countenance of an angel, her eyes sparkling with good humour, and blooming as a May-morning, the business is *done*. I give my consent. Although I heard not a word pass from her lips, I am sure she is all intelligence. My boy *shall* have her. The other young ladies are agreeable: but if this be the lady my kinsman is in love with, he *shall* have her. How will she outshine all our Caermarthen ladies; and yet we have charming girls in Caermarthen!—Am I, or am I not right, Mr. Reeves, as to my nephew's *flame*, as they call it?

The lady you describe, Sir Rowland, is Miss Byron.

And then Mr. Reeves, in his usual partial manner, let his heart overflow at his lips in my favour.

Thank God, thank God! said the knight. Let us return. Let us go in again. I will say something to her to make her speak: but not a word to dash her. I expect her voice to be music, if it be as harmonious as the rest of her. By the softness or harshness of her voice, let me tell you, Mr. Reeves, I form a judgment of the heart, and soul, and manners, of a lady. 'Tis a *criterion*, as they call it, of my own; and I am hardly ever mistaken. Let us go in again, I pray ye.

They returned, and took their seats; the knight making an awkward apology for taking my cousin out.

Sir Rowland, his forehead smoothed, and his face shining, sat swelling, as big with meaning, yet not knowing how to begin. Mrs. Reeves and Miss Allestree were talking at the re-entrance of the gentlemen. Sir Rowland thought he must say something, however distant from his main purpose. Breaking silence therefore; You, ladies, seemed

to be deep in discourse when we came in. Whatever were your subject, I beg you will resume it.

They had finished, they assured him, what they had to say.

Sir Rowland seemed still at a loss. He hemmed three times; and looked at me with particular kindness. Mr. Reeves then, in pity to his fulness, asked him how long he proposed to stay in town?

He had thought, he said, to have set out in a week; but something had happened, which he believed could not be completed under a *fortnight.* Yet I want to be down, said he; for I had just finished, as I came up, the new-built house I design to present to my nephew when he marries. I pretend, plain man as I am, to be a judge, both of taste and elegance [Sir Rowland was now set a going.] All I wish for is to see him happily settled. Ah, ladies! that I need not go further than this table for a wife for my boy?

We all smiled, and looked upon each other.

You young ladies, proceeded he, have great advantages in certain cases over us men; and this (which I little thought of till it came to be my own case) whether we speak for our kindred or for ourselves. But will you, madam, to Mrs. Reeves, will you, Sir, to Mr. Reeves, answer my questions—as to these ladies?—I *must* have a niece among them. My nephew, though I say it, is one whom any lady may love: and as for fortune, let me alone to make him, in *addition* to his own, all clear as the sun, worthy of any woman's acceptance, though she were a duchess.

We were all silent, and smiled upon one another.

What I would ask then, is, Which of the ladies before me—Mercy! I believe by their smiling, and by their pretty looks, they are none of them engaged. I will begin with the young lady on your

right hand. She looks *so* lovely, *so* good-natured, and *so* condescending!—Mercy! what an open forehead!—Hem!—Forgive me, madam; but I believe you would not disdain to answer my question yourself. Are you, madam, are you absolutely and *bonâ fide*, disengaged? or are you not?

As this, Sir Rowland, answered I, is a question I can best resolve, I frankly own, that I am disengaged.

Charming! charming!—Mercy! Why now what a noble frankness in that answer!—No jesting matter! You may smile, ladies. I hope, madam, you say true: I hope I may rely upon it, that your affections are not engaged.

You may, Sir Rowland. I do not love, even in jest, to be guilty of an untruth.

Admirable!—But let me tell you, madam, that I hope you will not many days have this to say. Ad's-my life! sweet soul! how I rejoice to see that charming flush in the finest cheek in the world! But heaven forbid that I should dash so sweet a creature!—Well, but now there is no going further. Excuse me, ladies; I mean not a slight to any of you: but now, you know, there is no going further:—And will you, madam, permit me to introduce to you, as a lover, as an humble servant, a very proper and agreeable young man? *Let* me introduce him: he is *my* nephew. Your looks are all graciousness. Perhaps you have seen him: and if you are really disengaged, you can have no objection to him; of that I am confident. And I am told, that you have nobody that either *can* or *will* controul you.

The more controulable for that very reason, Sir Rowland.

Ad's-my-life, I like your answer. Why, madam, you must be full as good as you look to be. I wish I were a young man myself for *your sake!* But tell me, madam, will you permit a visit from my nephew

this afternoon?—Come, come, dear young lady, be as gracious as you look to be. Fortune must do. Had you not a shilling, I should rejoice in such a niece: and that is more than I ever said in my life before. My nephew is a sober man, a modest man. He has a good estate of his own: a clear 2000*l.* a year. I will add to it in my life-time as much more. Be all this good company witnesses for me. I am no flincher. It is well known that the word of Sir Rowland Meredith is as good as his bond at all times. I love these open doings. I love to be above-board. What signifies shilly-shally? What says the old proverb?

Happy is the wooing
That is not long a doing.

But, Sir Rowland, said I, there are proverbs that may be set against your proverb. You hint that I have seen the gentleman: now I have never yet seen the man whose addresses I could encourage.

O, I like you the better for that. None but the *giddy* love at first sight. Ad's-my-life, you would have been snapt up before now, young as you are, could you easily have returned love for love. Why, madam, you cannot be above sixteen?

O, Sir Rowland, you are mistaken. Cheerfulness, and a contented mind, make a difference to advantage of half a dozen years at any time. I am much nearer twenty-one than *nineteen*, I assure you.

Nearer to twenty-one than *nineteen*, and yet so freely tell your age without asking!

Miss Byron, Sir Rowland, said Mrs. Reeves, is young enough at twenty, surely, to her own age.

True, madam; but at twenty, if not before, time always stands still with women. A lady's age once known, will be always remembered; and that more for spite than love. At twenty-eight or thirty, I be-

lieve most ladies are willing to strike off half a dozen years at least.—And yet, and yet, (smiling, and looking arch) I have always said (pardon me, ladies) that it is a sign, when women are so desirous to conceal their age, that they think they shall be good for nothing when in years. Ah, ladies! shaking his head, and laughing, women don't think of that. But how I admire you, madam, for your frankness! Would to the Lord you were twenty-four!—I would have no woman marry under twenty-four: and that, let me tell you, ladies, for the following reasons—standing up, and putting the fore-finger of his right-hand, extended with a flourish, upon the thumb of his left.

O, Sir Rowland! I doubt not but you can give very good reasons. And I assure you, I intend not to marry on the wrong side, as I call it, of twenty-four.

Admirable, by mercy! but that won't do neither. The man lives not, young lady, who will stay your time, if he can have you at his. I love your noble frankness. Then such sweetness of countenance (sitting down, and audibly whispering, and jogging my cousin with his elbow) such dove-like eyes, daring to tell all that is in the honest heart!—I am a physiognomist, madam (raising his voice to me.) Ad's-my-life, you are a perfect paragon! Say you will encourage my boy, or you will be w[illegible] for (standing up again) I will come and co[illegible] myself. A good estate gives a man confidence; and, when I set about it—Hum!—(one hand stuck in his side; flourishing with the other) no woman yet, I do assure you,—ever won my heart as you have done.

O Sir Rowland, I thought you were too wise to be swayed by first impressions: none but the *giddy*, you know, love at first sight.

Admirable! admirable indeed! I knew you had wit at will; and I am sure you have wisdom. Know you, ladies, that *wit* and *wisdom* are two different things, and are very rarely seen together? Plain man as I appear to be (looking on himself first on one side, then on the other, and unbuttoning his coat two buttons to let a gold braid appear upon his waistcoat) I can tell ye, I have not lived all this time for nothing. I am considered in Wales—Hem! —But I will not praise myself.—Ad's-my-life! how do this young lady's perfections run me all into tongue!—But I see you all respect her as well as I; so I need not make apology to the rest of you young ladies, for the distinction paid to her. I wish I had as many nephews as there are ladies of ye disengaged: by mercy, we would be all of kin.

Thank you, Sir Rowland, said each of the young ladies, smiling, and diverted at his oddity.

But as to my observation, continued the knight, that none but the *giddy* love at first sight; there is no general rule without exception, you know: every man *must* love *you* at first sight. Do I not love you myself? and yet never did I see you before, nor any-body like you.

You know not what you do, Sir Rowland, to raise thus the vanity of a poor girl. How may you make conceit and pride run away with her, till she becomes contemptible for both in the eye of every person whose good opinion is worth cultivating?

Ad's-my-life, that's prettily said! But let me tell you, that the *she* who can give this caution in the midst of her praisings, can be in no danger of being run away with by her vanity. Why, madam! you *extort* praises from me! I never ran on so glibly in praise of mortal woman before. You must cease to look, to smile, to speak, I can tell you, if you would have me cease to praise you!

'Tis well you are not a young man, Sir Rowland, said Miss Allestree. You seem to have the art of engaging a woman's attention. You seem to know how to turn her own artillery against her; and, as your sex generally do, to exalt her in courtship, that you may have it in your power to abase her afterwards.

Why, madam, I must own, that we men live to sixty, before we know how to deal with you ladies, or with the world either; and then we are not fit to engage with the one, and are ready to quit the other. An old head upon a young pair of shoulders would make rare work among ye. But to the main point (looking very kindly on me): I ask no questions about you, madam. Fortune is not to be mentioned. I want you not to have any. Not that the lady is the worse for having a fortune: and a man may stand a chance for as good a wife among those who have fortunes, as among those who have none. I adore you for your frankness of heart. Be all of a piece now, I beseech you. You are disengaged, you say: Will you admit of a visit from my nephew? My boy may be bashful. True love is always modest and diffident. You don't look as if you would dislike a man for being modest. And I will come along with him *myself*.

And then the old knight looked important, as one who, if he lent his head to his nephew's shoulders, had no doubt of succeeding.

What, Sir Rowland! admit of a visit from your nephew, in order to engage him in a three years courtship? I have told you that I intend not to marry till I am twenty-four.

Twenty-four, I must own, is the age of marriage I should choose for a lady; and for the reasons aforesaid.—But, now I think of it, I did not tell you my reasons—These be they—

Down went his cup and saucer; up went his left hand ready spread, and his crooked finger of his right hand, as ready to enumerate.

No doubt, Sir Rowland, you have very good reasons.

But, madam, you must *hear* them—And I shall prove—

I am convinced, Sir Rowland, that twenty-four is an age early enough.

But I shall prove, madam, that you at twenty, or at twenty-one—

Enough, enough, Sir Rowland: What need of proof when one is convinced?

But you know not, madam, what I was driving at—

Well but, Sir Rowland, said Miss Bramber, will not the reasons you could give for the proper age at twenty-four, make against your wishes in this case?

They will make against them, madam, in general cases: but in this particular case they will make for me: for the lady before me is—

Not in my opinion, perhaps, Sir Rowland, will your reasons make for you: and then your exception in my favour will signify nothing. And besides, you must know, that I never can accept of a compliment that is made me at the expence of my sex.

Well then, madam, I hope you forbid me in favour to my plea. You are loth to hear any-thing for twenty-four against twenty-one, I hope?

That is another point, Sir Rowland.

Why, madam, you seem to be afraid of hearing my reasons. No man living knows better than I, how to behave in ladies' company. I believe I should not be so little of a gentleman, as to offend the nicest ear. No need indeed! no need indeed! looking archly; ladies on certain subjects are very quick.

That is to say, Sir Rowland, interrupted Mrs. Reeves, that modesty is easily alarmed.

If any-thing is said, or implied, upon certain subjects, that you would not be thought to understand, ladies know how to be ignorant.

And then he laughed.

Undoubtedly, Sir Rowland, said I, such company as this need not be apprehensive, that a gentleman like you, should say any-thing unsuitable to it. But do you really think affected ignorance can be ever graceful, or a proof of true delicacy? Let me rather say, That a woman of virtue would be wanting to her character, if she had not courage enough to express her resentment of any discourse that is meant as an insult upon modesty.

Admirably said again! But men will sometimes forget, that there are ladies in company.

Very favourably put for the men, Sir Rowland. But pardon me, if I own, that I should have a mean opinion of a man, who allowed himself to talk even to *men* what a woman might not hear. A pure heart, whether in man or woman, will be always, in every company, on every occasion, pure.

Ad's-my-life, you have excellent notions, madam! I wanted to hear you speak just now: and now you make me, and every one else, silent—Twenty-one! why what you say would shame *sixty-one*. You must have kept excellent company all your life!—Mercy! if ever I heard the like from a lady so young!—What a glory do you reflect back upon all who had any hand in your education! Why was I not born within the past thirty years? I might then have had some hopes of you myself!—And this brings me to my former subject, of my nephew—But, Mr. Reeves, one word with you, Mr. Reeves. I beg your pardon, ladies: but the importance of the matter will

excuse me: and I must get out of town as soon as I can—One word with you, Mr. Reeves.

The gentlemen withdrew together: for breakfast by this time was over. And then the knight opened all his heart to Mr. Reeves, and besought his interest. He would afterwards have obtained an audience, as he called it, of me: but the three young ladies having taken leave of us, and Mrs. Reeves and I being retired to dress, I excused myself.

He then desired leave to attend me to-morrow evening: but Mr. Reeves pleading engagements till Monday evening, he besought him to indulge him with his interest in that long *gap of time*, as he called it, and for my being then in the way.

And thus, Lucy, have I given you an ample account of what has passed with regard to this new servant; as gentlemen call themselves, in order to become our masters.

'Tis now Friday morning. We are just setting out to dine with Lady Betty. If the day furnishes me with any amusing materials for my next pacquet, its agreeableness will be doubled to

Your ever-affectionate

HARRIET BYRON.

LETTER X.

MISS BYRON. IN CONTINUATION.

Friday night.

SOME amusement, my Lucy, the day has afforded: indeed more than I could have wished. A large pacquet, however, for Selby-house.

Lady Betty received us most politely. She had company with her, to whom she introduced us, and presented me in a very advantageous character.

Shall I tell you how their first appearance struck me, and what I have since heard and observed of them?

The first I shall mention was Miss CANTILLON; very pretty; but visibly proud, affected, and conceited.

The second Miss CLEMENTS; plain; but of a fine understanding, improved by reading; and who having no personal advantages to be vain of, has, by the cultivation of her mind, obtained a preference in every one's opinion over the fair Cantillon.

The third was Miss BARNEVELT, a lady of masculine features, and whose mind belied not those features; for she has the character of being loud, bold, free, even fierce when opposed; and affects at all times such airs of contempt of her own sex, that one almost wonders at her condescending to wear petticoats.

The gentlemen's names were WALDEN and SINGLETON; the first, an Oxford scholar of family and fortune; but quaint and opinionated, despising every one who has not had the benefit of an university education.

Mr. Singleton is a harmless man; who is, it seems, the object of more ridicule, even down to his very name, among all his acquaintance, than I think he by any means ought, considering the apparent inoffensiveness of the man, who did not give *himself* his intellects; and his constant good humour, which might intitle him to better quarter; the rather too as he has one point of knowledge, which those who think themselves his superiors in understanding do not always attain, the knowledge of himself; for he is humble, modest, ready to confess an inferiority to every one: and as laughing at a jest is by some taken for high applause, he is ever the first to bestow that commendation on what others say; though

it must be owned, he now and then mistakes for a jest what is none: which, however, may be generally more the fault of the speakers than of Mr. Singleton; since he takes his cue from their smiles, especially when those are seconded by the laugh of one of whom he has a good opinion.

Mr. Singleton is in possession of a good estate, which makes amends for many defects: he has a turn, it is said, to the well-managing of it; and nobody understands his own interest better than he; by which knowledge, he has opportunities to lay obligations upon many of those, who behind his back think themselves intitled by their supposed superior sense to deride him: and he is ready enough to oblige in this way: but it is always on such securities, that he has never given cause for spendthrifts to laugh at him on that account.

It is thought that the friends of the fair Cantillon would not be averse to an alliance with this gentleman: while I, were I his sister, should rather wish, that he had so much wisdom in his weakness, as to devote himself to the worthier Pulcheria Clements (Lady Betty's wish as well as mine) whose fortune, though not despicable, and whose humbler views, would make her think herself repaid, by his fortune, the obligation she would lay him under by her acceptance of him.

Nobody, it seems, thinks of a *husband* for Miss Barnevelt. She is sneeringly spoken of rather as a *young fellow*, than as a woman; and who will one day look out for a *wife* for herself. One reason indeed, she every-where gives, for being satisfied with being a woman; which is, *that she cannot be married to a* WOMAN.

An odd creature, my dear. But see what women get by going out of character. Like the bats in the fable, they are looked upon as mortals of a doubtful

species, hardly owned by either, and laughed at by both.

This was the company, and all the company, besides us, that Lady Betty expected. But mutual civilities had hardly passed, when Lady Betty, having been called out, returned, introducing, as a gentleman who would be acceptable to every one, Sir HARGRAVE POLLEXFEN. He is, whispered she to me, as he saluted the rest of the company, in a very gallant manner, a young baronet of a very large estate, the greatest part of which has lately come to him by the death of a grandmother, and two uncles, all very rich.

When he was presented to me, by name, and I to him, I think myself very happy, said he, in being admitted to the presence of a young lady so celebrated for her graces of person and mind. Then, addressing himself to Lady Betty, Much did I hear, when I was at the last Northampton races, of Miss Byron: but little did I expect to find report fall so short of what I see.

Miss Cantillon bridled, played with her fan, and looked as if she thought herself slighted: a little scorn intermingled with the airs she gave herself.

Miss Clements smiled, and looked pleased, as if she enjoyed, good-naturedly, a compliment made to one of the sex which she adorns by the goodness of her heart.

Miss Barnevelt said, she had, from the moment I first entered, beheld me with the eye of a lover. And freely taking my hand, squeezed it.—Charming creature! said she, as if addressing a country innocent, and perhaps expecting me to be covered with blushes and confusion.

The baronet, excusing himself to Lady Betty, assured her, that she must place this his bold intru-

sion to the account of Miss Byron; he having been told that she was to be there.

Whatever were his motive, Lady Betty said, he did her favour; and she was sure the whole company would think themselves *doubly* obliged to Miss Byron.

The student looked as if he thought himself eclipsed by Sir Hargrave, and as if, in revenge, he was putting his fine speeches into Latin, and trying them by the rules of grammar; a broken sentence from a classic author bursting from his lips; and, at last, standing up, half on tip-toe (as if he wanted to look down upon the baronet) he stuck one hand in his side, and passed by him, casting a contemptuous eye on his gaudy dress.

Mr. Singleton smiled, and looked as if delighted with all he saw and heard. Once indeed, he tried to speak: his mouth actually opened, to give passage to his words; as sometimes seems to be his way before the words are quite ready: but he sat down satisfied with the effort.

It is true, people who do not make themselves contemptible by affectation should not be despised. Poor and rich, wise and unwise, we are all links of the same great chain. And you must tell me, my dear, if I, in endeavouring to give true descriptions of the persons I see, incur the censure I pass on others who despise any one for the defects they cannot help.

Will you forgive me, my dear, if I make this letter as long as my last?

No, say.

Well then, I thank you for a freedom so consistent with our friendship: and conclude with assurances, that I am, and ever will be,

Most affectionately yours,

HARRIET BYRON.

LETTER XI.

MISS BYRON. IN CONTINUATION.

It was convenient to me, Lucy, to break off just where I did in my last; else I should not have been so very self-denying as to suppose you had no curiosity to hear, what undoubtedly I wanted to tell. Two girls talking over a new set of company, would my uncle Selby say, are not apt to break off very abruptly; not she especially of the two, who has found out a fair excuse to repeat every compliment made to herself; and when perhaps there may be a new admirer in the case.

May there so, my uncle? And which of the gentlemen do you think the man? The baronet, I suppose, you guess.—And so he is.

Well then, let me give you, Lucy, a sketch of him. But consider; I form my accounts from what I have since been told, as well as from what I observed at the time.

Sir Hargrave Pollexfen is handsome and genteel; pretty tall, about twenty-eight or thirty. His complexion is a little of the fairest for a man, and a little of the palest. He has remarkably bold eyes; rather approaching to what we would call goggling; and he gives himself airs with them as if he wished to have them thought rakish: perhaps as a recommendation, in his opinion, to the ladies. Lady Betty, on his back being turned, praising his person, Miss Cantillon said, Sir Hargrave had the finest eyes she ever saw in a man. They were manly, *meaning* ones.

He is very voluble in speech; but seems to owe his volubility more to his want of doubt, than to the extraordinary merit of what he says. Yet he is thought to have sense; and if he could prevail upon

himself to hear more, and speak less; he would better deserve the good opinion he thinks himself sure of. But as he can say any-thing without hesitation, and excites a laugh by laughing himself at all he is going to say, as well as at what he has just said, he is thought infinitely agreeable by the gay, and by those who wish to drown thought in merriment.

Sir Hargrave, it seems, has travelled: but he must have carried abroad with him a great number of follies, and a great deal of affectation, if he has left any of them behind him.

But, with all his foibles, he is said to be a man of enterprize and courage; and young women, it seems, must take care how they laugh with him: for be makes ungenerous constructions to the disadvantage of a woman whom he can bring to seem pleased with his jests.

I will tell you hereafter, how I came to know this, and even worse, of him.

The taste of the present age seems to be dress; no wonder, therefore, that such a man as Sir Hargrave aims to excel in it. What can be misbestowed by a man on his person, who values it more than his mind? But he would, in my opinion, better become his dress, if the pains he undoubtedly takes before he ventures to come into public, were less apparent: this I judge from his solicitude to preserve all in exact order, when in company; for he forgets not to pay his respects to himself at every glass; yet does it with a seeming consciousness, as if he would hide a vanity too apparent to be concealed; breaking from it, if he finds himself observed, with a half-careless yet seemingly dissatisfied air, pretending to have discovered something amiss in himself. This seldom fails to bring him a compliment: of which he shews himself very sen-

sible, by affectedly disclaiming the merit of it; perhaps with this speech, bowing with his spread hand on his breast, waving his head to and fro—By my soul, Madam (or Sir) you do me too much honour.

Such a man is Sir Hargrave Pollexfen.

He placed himself next to the country girl; and laid himself out in fine speeches to her, running on in such a manner, that I had not for some time an opportunity to convince him, that I had been in company of gay people before. He would have it that I was a perfect beauty, and he supposed me very young—very silly of course: and gave himself such airs, as if he were sure of my admiration.

I viewed him steadily several times; and my eye once falling under his, as I was looking at him, I dare say, he at that moment pitied the poor fond heart, which he supposed was in tumults about him; when, at the very time, I was considering whether, if I were obliged to have the one or the other, as a punishment for some great fault I had committed, my choice would fall on Mr. Singleton, or on him. I mean, supposing the former were not a remarkably obstinate man; since obstinacy in a weak man, I think, must be worse than tyranny in a man of sense.—If indeed a man of sense can be a tyrant.

A summons to dinner relieved me from his more particular addresses, and placed him at a distance from me.

Sir Hargrave, the whole time of dinner, received advantage from the supercilious looks and behaviour of Mr. Walden; who seemed, on every-thing the baronet said (and he was seldom silent) half to despise him; for he made at times so many different mouths of contempt, that I thought it was impossible for the *same* features to express them. I have been making mouths in the glass for several minutes, to try to recover some of Mr. Walden's, in

order to describe them to you, Lucy; but I cannot for my life so distort my face as to enable me to give you a notion of one of them.

He might perhaps have been better justified in some of his contempts, had it not been visible, that the consequence which he took from the baronet, he gave to himself; and yet was as censurable one way, as Sir Hargrave was the other.

Mirth, however insipid, will occasion smiles; though sometimes to the disadvantage of the mirthful. But gloom, severity, moroseness, will always disgust, though in a Solomon. Mr. Walden had not been taught that: and indeed it might seem a little ungrateful [don't you think so, Lucy?] if women failed to reward a man with their smiles, who scrupled not to make himself a—monkey (shall I say?) to please them.

Never before did I see the difference between the man of the town, and the man of the college, displayed in a light so striking as in these two gentlemen in the conversation after dinner. The one seemed resolved not to be pleased; while the other laid himself out to please every-body; and that in a manner so much at his own expence, as frequently to bring into question his understanding. By a *second* silly thing he banished the remembrance of the *first;* by a *third* the *second*; and so on; and by continually laughing at his own absurdities, left us at liberty to suppose that his folly was his choice; and that, had it not been to divert the company, he would have made a better figure.

Mr. Walden, as was evident by his scornful brow, by the contemptuous motions of his lip, and by his whole face affectedly turned from the baronet, grudged him the smile that sat upon every one's countenance; and for which, without distinguishing whether it was a smile of *approbation* or *not*, he

looked as if he pitied us all, and as if he thought himself cast into unequal company. Nay twice or thrice he addressed himself, in preference to every one else, to honest simpering Mr. Singleton: who, for his part, as was evident, much better relished the baronet's flippances, than the dry significance of the student. For, whenever Sir Hargrave spoke, Mr. Singleton's mouth was open: but it was quite otherwise with him, when Mr. Walden spoke, even at the time that he paid him the distinction of addressing himself to him, as if he were the principal person in the company.

But one word, by the bye, Lucy—Don't you think it is very happy for us foolish women, that the generality of the lords of the *creation* are not much wiser than ourselves? Or, to express myself in other words, That *over*-wisdom is as foolish a thing to the full, as *moderate* folly!—But, hush! I have done.—I know that at this place my uncle will be ready to rise against me.

After dinner, Mr. Walden, not choosing to be any longer so egregiously eclipsed by the man of the town, put forth the scholar.

By the way, let me ask my uncle, if the word *scholar* means not the *learner*, rather than the *learned?* If it originally means no more, I would suppose that formerly the most learned men were the most modest, contenting themselves with being thought but *learners;* for as my revered first instructor used to say, the more a man knows, the more he will find he has to know.

Pray, Sir Hargrave, said Mr. Walden, may I ask you—You had a thought just now, speaking of love and beauty, which I know you must have from Tibullus [and then he repeated the line in an *heroic* accent; and, pausing, looked round upon us women]

Which university had the honour of finishing your studies, Sir Hargrave? I presume you were brought up at one of them.

Not I, said the baronet: A man, surely, may read Tibullus, and Virgil too, without being indebted to either university for his learning.

No man, Sir Hargrave, in my *humble* opinion [with a decisive air he spoke the word *humble*] can be well-grounded in any branch of learning, who has not been at one of our famous universities.

I never yet proposed, Mr. Walden, to qualify myself for a degree. My chaplain is a very pretty fellow. He understands Tibullus, I believe [immoderately laughing, and by his eyes cast in turn upon each person at table, bespeaking a general smile]—And of Oxford, as you are.

And again he laughed: but his laugh was then such a one as rather shewed ridicule than mirth: a provoking laugh, such a one as Mr. Greville often affects when he is in a disputing humour, in order to dash an opponent out of countenance, *by getting the laugh*, instead of the argument, on his side.

My uncle, you know, will have it sometimes, that his girl has a satirical vein. I am afraid she has—But this I will say for her: she means no ill-nature: she loves every-body; but not their faults: as her uncle in his letter tells her. Nor wishes to be spared for her own. Nor, very probably, is she, if those who see her, write *of* her to their chosen friends as she does to hers, of them.

Shall I tell you what I imagine each person of the company I am writing about (writing in character) would say of me to *their* correspondents?—It would be digressing too much, or I would.

Mr. Walden in his heart, I dare say, was revenged on the baronet. He gave him such a look,

as would have grieved *me* the whole day, had it been given me by one whom I valued.

Sir Hargrave had too much business for his eyes with the ladies, in order to obtain their countenance, to trouble himself about the looks of the men. And indeed he seemed to have as great a contempt for Mr. Walden, as Mr. Walden had for him.

But here I shall be too late for the post. Will this stuff go down with you at Selby-house, in want of better subjects?

Every-thing from you, my Harriet—

Thank you! thank you, all, my indulgent friends! So it ever was. Trifles from those we love, are acceptable. May I deserve your love.

Adieu, my Lucy!—But tell my Nancy, that she has delighted me by her letter.

H. B.

LETTER XII.

MISS BYRON. IN CONTINUATION.

What is *your* opinion, my charming Miss Byron? said the baronet: May not a man of fortune, who has *not* received his education and *polish* [he pronounced the word *polish* with an emphasis, and another laugh] at an university, make as good a figure in social life, and as ardent a lover, as if he had?

I would have been silent: but, gazing in my face, he repeated, What say *you* to this, Miss Byron?

The world, Sir Hargrave, I have heard called an university: but, is it not an obvious truth, that neither a learned, nor what is called a fine education, has any other value than as each tends to improve the morals of men, and to make them wise and good?

The world an university! replied Mr. Walden. Why, truly, looking up to Sir Hargrave's face, and then down to his feet, disdainfully, as if he would measure him with his eyes, I cannot but say, twisting his head on one side, and with a drolling accent, that the world produces very pretty scholars—for the ladies—

The baronet took fire at being so contemptuously measured by the eye of the student; and I thought it was not amiss, for fear of high words between them, to put myself forward.

And are not women, Mr. Walden, resumed I, one half in number, though not perhaps in value, of the human species?—Would it not be pity, Sir, if the knowledge that is to be obtained in the *lesser* university should make a man despise what is to be acquired in the *greater*, in which that knowledge was principally intended to make him useful?

This diverted Sir Hargrave's anger: Well, Mr. Walden, said he, exultingly rubbing his hands, what say you to the young lady's observation? By my soul it is worth your notice. You may carry it down with you to *your* university; and the best scholars there will not be the worse for attending to it.

Mr. Walden seemed to collect himself, as if he were inclined to consider me with more attention than he had done before; and waving his hand, as if he would put by the baronet, as an adversary he had done with, I am to thank you, madam, said he, it seems for your observation. And so the *lesser* university—

I have great veneration, Mr. Walden, interrupted I, for learning, and great honour for learned men—But this is a subject—

That you must not get off from, young lady.

I am sorry to hear you say so, Sir—But indeed I must.

The company seemed pleased to see me so likely to be drawn in; and this encouraged Mr. Walden to push his weak adversary.

Know you, madam, said he, any-thing of the learned languages?

No, indeed, Sir—Nor do I know which, particularly, you call so.

The Greek, the Latin, madam.

Who, I, a woman, know any-thing of Latin and Greek! I know but one lady who is mistress of both; and she finds herself so much an owl among the birds, that she wants of all things to be thought to have unlearned them.

Why, ladies, I cannot but *say*, that I should rather choose to marry a woman whom I could teach something, than one who would think herself qualified to teach me.

Is it a *necessary* consequence, Sir, said Miss Clements, that knowledge, which makes a man shine, should make a woman vain and pragmatical? May not two persons, having the same taste, improve each other? Was not this the case of Monsieur and Madame Dacier?

Flint and steel to each other, added Lady Betty.

Turkish policy, I doubt, in you men, proceeded Miss Clements—*No second brother near the throne.* That empire some think the safest which is founded in ignorance.

We know, Miss Clements, replied Mr. Walden, that you are a well-read lady. But I have nothing to say to observations that are in every-body's mouth—Pardon me, madam.

Indeed, Sir, said Mr. Reeves, I think Miss Clements should *not* pardon you. There is, in my opinion, great force in what she said.

But I have a mind to talk with this fair lady, your cousin, Mr. Reeves. She is the very woman that I wish to hold an argument with, on the hints she threw out.

Pardon me, Sir. But I cannot return the compliment. I cannot argue.

And yet, madam, I will not let you go off so easily. You seem to be very happy in your elocution; and to have some pretty notions, for so young a lady.

I cannot argue, Sir.

Dear Miss Byron, said Sir Hargrave, hear what Mr. Walden has to say to you.

Every one made the same request. I was silent, looked down, and played with my fan.

When Mr. Walden had liberty to say what he pleased, he seemed at a loss himself, for words.

At last, I asked you, madam, I asked you (hesitatingly began he) whether you knew any-thing of the learned languages? It has been whispered to me, that you have had great advantages from a grandfather, of whose learning and politeness we have heard much. He was a scholar. He was of Christ-church, in our university, if I am not mistaken—To my question you answered, That you knew not particularly which were the languages that I called the learned ones: and you have been pleased to throw out hints in relation to the *lesser* and the *greater* university; by all which you certainly mean something—

Pray, Mr. Walden, said I—

And pray, Miss Byron—I am afraid of all smatterers in learning. Those who know a little—and ladies cannot know to the bottom—They have not the happiness of an university education—

Nor is every man at the *university*, I presume, Sir, a Mr. Walden.

O my Lucy! I have since been told, that this pragmatical man has very few admirers in the university to which, out of it, he is so fond of boasting a relation.

He took what I said for a compliment—Why, as to that, madam—bowing—But this is a misfortune *to* ladies, not a fault *in* them—But, as I was going to say, Those who know little, are very seldom sound, are very seldom orthodox, as we call it, whether respecting *religion* or *learning:* and as it seems you lost your grandfather too early to be well-grounded in the latter (in the former Lady Betty, who is my informant, says, you are a very *good* young lady) I should be glad to put you right if you happen to be a little out of the way.

I thank you, Sir, bowing, and (simpleton!) still playing with my fan. But, though Mr. Reeves said nothing, he did not think me very politely treated. Yet he wanted, he told me afterwards, to have me drawn out.

He should not have served me so, I told him; especially among strangers, and *men.*

Now, madam, will you be pleased to inform me, said Mr. Walden, whether you had any *particular* meaning, when you answered, that you knew not which I called the learned languages? You must know, that the Latin and Greek are of those so called.

I beg, Mr. Walden, that I may not be thus singled out—Mr. Reeves—Sir—*you* have had an university education. Pray relieve your cousin.

Mr. Reeves smiled; bowed his head; but said nothing.

You were pleased, madam, proceeded Mr. Walden, to mention one learned lady; and said that she looked upon herself as an owl among the birds.—

And you, Sir, said, that you had rather (and I believe most men are of your mind) have a woman you could teach—

Than one who would suppose she could teach me—I did so.

Well, Sir, and would you have me be guilty of an ostentation that would bring me no credit, if I had had some pains taken with me in my education? But indeed, Sir, I know not any-thing of those you call the learned languages. Nor do I take all learning to consist in the knowledge of languages*.

All learning!—Nor I, madam—But if you place not learning in language, be so good as to tell us what you *do* place it in?

He nodded his head with an air, as if he had said, This pretty Miss has got out of her depth: I believe I shall have her now.

I would rather, Sir, said I, be a hearer than a speaker; and the one would better become me than the other. I answered Sir Hargrave, because he thought proper to apply to me.

And *I*, madam, apply to you likewise.

Then, Sir, I have been taught to think, that a learned man and a linguist may very well be two persons †.

Be pleased to proceed, madam.

Languages, undoubtedly, Sir, are of use, to let us into the knowledge for which so many of the antients were famous—But—

Here I stopt. Every one's eyes were upon me. I was a little out of countenance.

In what a situation, Lucy, are we women?—If we have some little genius, and have taken pains to cul-

* This argument is resumed, Vol. VI. by a more competent judge both of learning and languages than Mr. Walden.

† In other words, that science or knowledge, and not language merely, is learning.

tivate it, we must be thought guilty of affectation, whether we appear desirous to conceal it, or submit to have it called forth.

But, what, madam? Pray proceed, eagerly said Mr. Walden—*But*, what, madam?

But have not the moderns, Sir, if I must speak, the same advantages which the antients had, and some which they had not? The first great genius's of all had not human example, had not human precepts—

Nor were the first genius's *of all* (with an emphasis, replied Mr. Walden) so perfect, as the observations of the genius's of after-times, which were built upon their foundations, made *them;* and *they* others. Learning, or knowledge, as you choose to call it, was a progressive thing: and it became necessary to understand the different languages in which the sages of antiquity wrote, in order to avail ourselves of their learning.

Very right, Sir, I believe. You consider skill in languages then as a *vehicle* to knowledge—Not, I presume, as *science* itself.

I was sorry the baronet laughed; because his laughing made it more difficult for me to get off, as I wanted to do.

Pray, Sir Hargrave, said Mr. Walden, let not *every* thing that is said be laughed at. I am fond of talking to this young lady: and a conversation upon this topic may tend as much to *edification*, perhaps, as most of the subjects with which we have been hitherto *entertained.*

Sir Hargrave took an empty glass, and with it humorously rapped his own knuckles, bowed, smiled, and was silent; by that act of yielding, which had gracefulness in it, gaining more honour to himself, than Mr. Walden obtained by his rebuke of him, however just.

Now, madam, if you please, said Mr. Walden (and he put himself into a disputing attitude) a word or two with you, on your *vehicle*, and-so-forth.

Pray spare me, Sir: I am willing to sit down quietly. I am unequal to this subject. I have done.

But, said the baronet, you must *not* sit down quietly, madam: Mr. Walden has promised us *edification*; and we all attend the effect of his promise.

No, no, madam, said Mr. Walden, you must not come off so easily. You have thrown out some extraordinary things for a *lady*, and especially for so young a lady. From *you* we expect the opinions of your worthy grandfather, as well as your own notions. He no doubt told you, or you have read, that the competition set on foot between the learning of the antients and moderns, has been the subject of much debate among the learned in the latter end of the last century.

Indeed, Sir, I know nothing of the matter. I am *not* learned. My grandfather was chiefly intent to make me an English, and, I may say, a *Bible* scholar. I was very young when I had the misfortune to lose him. My whole endeavour has been since, that the pains he took with me, should not be cast away.

I have discovered you, madam, to be a *Parthian* lady. You can fight flying, I see. You must not, I tell you, come off so easily for what you have thrown out. Let me ask you, Did you ever read *The Tale of a Tub?*

Sir Hargrave laughed out, though evidently in the wrong place.

How apt are laughing spirits, said Mr. Walden, looking solemnly, to laugh, when perhaps they ought—There he stopt—[*to be laughed at*, I suppose he had in his head.] But I will not, however, be

laughed out of my question.—Have you, madam, read Swift's *Tale of a Tub?*—There *is* such a book, Sir Hargrave; looking with an air of contempt at the baronet.

I know there is, Mr. Walden, replied the baronet, and again laughed—*Have you*, madam? to me. Pray let us know what Mr. Walden drives at.

I have, Sir.

Why then, madam, resumed Mr. Walden, you no doubt read, bound up with it, *The Battle of the Books;* a very fine piece, written in favour of the antients, and against the moderns; and thence must be acquainted with the famous dispute I mentioned. And this will shew you, that the moderns are but pygmies in science compared to the antients. And, pray, shall not the knowledge which enables us to understand and to digest the wisdom of these immortal antients be accounted learning? —Pray, madam, nodding his head, answer me that.

O how these pedants, whispered Sir Hargrave to Mr. Reeves, strut in the livery and brass buttons of the antients, and call their servility learning!

You are going beyond my capacity, Sir. I believe what you say is very just: yet the antients may be read, I suppose, and not understood.—But pray, Sir, let the Parthian fly the field. I promise you that she will not return to the charge. *Escape*, not *victory*, is all she contends for.

All in good time, madam—But who, pray, learns the language but with a view to understand the author?

No-body, I believe, Sir. But yet some who read the antients, may fail of improving by them.

I was going to say something further; but the baronet, by his loud and laughing applause, disconcerted me; and I was silent.

And here I must break off, till I return from the

play: and then, or in the morning early, I will begin on another sheet.

LETTER XIII.

MISS BYRON. IN CONTINUATION.

Now, Lucy, will I resume the thread of an argument, that you, perhaps, will not think worth remembering: yet, as I was called upon by every one to proceed, I would not omit it, were it but to have my uncle's opinion whether I was not too pert, and too talkative; for my conscience a little reproaches me. You know I have told him, that I will not unbespeak my monitor.

Mr. Walden told me, I seemed to think, that the knowledge we gather from the great antients is hardly worth the pains we take in acquiring the languages in which they wrote.

Not so, Sir. I have great respect even for *linguists*: Do we not owe to them the translation of the sacred books?—But methinks I could wish that such a distinction should be made between *language* and *science*, as should convince me, that *that* confusion of tongues, which was intended for a punishment of presumption in the early ages of the world, should not be thought to give us our greatest glory in these *more enlightened* times.

Well, madam, ladies must be treated as ladies. But I shall have great pleasure, on my return to Oxford, in being able to acquaint my learned friends, that they must all turn fine gentlemen, and *laughers* [Mr. Reeves had smiled as well as the baronet] and despise the great antients as men of straw, or very shortly they will stand no chance in the ladies' favour.

Good Mr. Walden! Good Mr. Walden! laughed the baronet, shaking his embroidered sides, let me, let me, beg your patience, while I tell you, that the young gentlemen at both universities are already in more danger of becoming *fine gentlemen* than *fine scholars*—

And then again he laughed; and looking round him, bespoke, in his usual way, a laugh from the rest of the company.

Mr. Reeves, a little touched at the scholar's reference to him, in the word *laughers*, said, It were to be wished, that, in all nurseries of learning, the *manners of youth* were proposed as the principal end. It is too known a truth, that the attention paid to languages has too generally swallowed up all other and more important considerations; insomuch that sound morals and good breeding themselves are obliged to give way to that which is of little moment, but as it promotes and inculcates those. And learned men, I am persuaded, if they *dared* to speak out, would not lay so much stress upon mere languages as you seem to do, Mr. Walden.

Learning *here*, replied Mr. Walden, a little peevishly, has not a fair tribunal to be tried at. As it is said of the advantages of birth or degree, so it may be said of learning; No one despises it that has pretensions to it. But, proceed, Miss Byron, if you please.

Very true, I believe, Sir, said I: But, on the other hand, may not those who have either, or both, value themselves too much on that account?

I knew once, said Miss Clements, an excellent scholar, who thought, that too great a portion of life was bestowed in the learning of languages; and that the works of many of the antients were more to be admired for the stamp which antiquity

has fixed upon them, and for the sake of their purity in languages that cannot alter (and whose works are therefore become the standard of those languages) than for the lights obtained from them by men of genius, in ages that we have reason to think more enlightened, as well by new discoveries as by revelation.

I am even tempted to ask, continued she, Whether the reputation of learning is not oftener acquired by skill in those branches of science which principally serve for amusement to inquisitive and curious minds, than by that in the more useful sort.

Here Mr. Walden interrupted her; and turning to me, as to the weaker adversary; yet with an air that had severity in it; I could *almost* wish, said he (and *but* almost, as you are a *lady*) that you, madam, knew the works of the great antients in their original languages.

Something, said Miss Clements, should be left for *men* to excel in. I cannot but approve of Mr. Walden's word-*almost*.

She then whispered me; Pray, Miss Byron, proceed (for she saw me a little out of countenance at Mr. Walden's severe air)—Strange, added she, still whispering, that people who know least how to argue, should be most eager to dispute. Thank Heaven, all scholars are not like this.

A little encouraged; Pray, Sir, said I, let me ask one question—Whether you do not think that our Milton, in his *Paradise Lost*, shews himself to be a very learned man? And yet that work is written wholly in the language of his own country, as the works of Homer and Virgil were in that of theirs:—and they, I presume, will be allowed to be learned men.

Milton, madam, let me tell you, is infinitely

obliged to the great antients; and his very frequent allusions to them, and his knowledge of their mythology, shew that he is.

His knowledge of their mythology, Sir!—His own subject so greatly, so nobly, so divinely, above that mythology!—I have been taught to think, by a very learned man, that it was a condescension in Milton to the taste of persons of more reading than genius in the age in which he wrote, to introduce so often as he does, his allusions to the pagan mythology: and that he neither raised his sublime subject, nor did credit to his vast genius, by it.

Mr. Addison, said Mr. Walden, is a writer admired by the *ladies*. Mr. Addison, madam, as you will find in your Spectators [sneeringly he spoke this] gives but the second place to Milton, on comparing some passages of his with some of Homer.

If Mr. Addison, Sir, has not the honour of being admired by the *gentlemen*, as well as by the *ladies*, I dare say Mr. Walden will not allow, that his authority should decide the point in question: and yet, as I remember, he greatly extols Milton. But I am going out of my depth—Only permit me to say one thing more—If Homer is to be preferred to Milton, he must be the sublimest of writers; and Mr. Pope, admirable as his translation of the Iliad is said to be, cannot have done him justice.

You seem, madam, to be a very deep *English* scholar. But say you this from your own observation, or from that of any other?

I readily own, that my lights are borrowed, replied I. I owe the observation to my godfather Mr. Deane. He is a scholar; but as great an admirer of Milton as of any of the antients. A gentleman, his particular friend, who was as great an admirer of Homer, undertook from Mr. Pope's translation of the Iliad, to produce passages that in sub-

limity exceeded any in the Paradise Lost. The gentlemen met at Mr. Deane's house, where I then was. They allowed me to be present; and this was the issue: the gentleman went away convinced, that the English poet as much excelled the Grecian in the grandeur of his sentiments, as his subject, founded on the Christian system, surpasses the pagan.

The debate, I have the vanity to think, said Mr. Walden, had *I* been a party in it, would have taken another turn; for I do insist upon it, that without the knowledge of the learned languages, a man cannot understand his own.

I opposed Shakespeare to this assertion: but wished on this occasion, that I had not been a party in this debate; for the baronet was even noisy in his applauses of what I said; and the applause of empty minds always gives one suspicion of having *incurred* it by one's over-forwardness.

He drowned the voice of Mr. Walden, who two or three times was earnest to speak; but not finding himself heard, drew up his mouth, as if to a contemptuous whistle, shrugged his shoulders, and sat collected in his own conscious worthiness: his eyes, however, were often cast upon the pictures that hung round the room, as much better objects than the living ones before him.

But what extremely disconcerted me, was a freedom of Miss Barnevelt's; taken upon what I last said, and upon Mr. Walden's hesitation, and Sir Hargrave's applauses: she professed that I was able to bring *her own sex* into reputation with her. Wisdom, as I call it, said she, notwithstanding what you have modestly alleged to depreciate your own, when it proceeds through teeth of ivory, and lips of coral, receives a double grace. And then clasping one of her mannish arms round me, she kissed my cheek.

I was surprised, and offended; and with the more reason, as Sir Hargrave, rising from his seat, declared, that since merit was to be approved in that manner, he thought himself obliged to follow so good an example.

I stood up, and said, Surely, Sir, my compliance with the request of the company, too much I fear at my own expence, calls rather for civility than freedom, from a gentleman. I beg, Sir Hargrave—There I stopt; and I am sure looked greatly in earnest.

He stood suspended till I had done speaking; and then, bowing, sat down again; but, as Mr. Reeves told me afterwards, he whispered a great oath in his ear, and declared, that he beheld with transport his future wife; and cursed himself if he would ever have another; vowing, in the same whisper, that were a thousand men to stand in his way, he would not scruple any means to remove them.

Miss Barnevelt only laughed at the freedom she had taken with me. She is a loud and fearless laugher. She hardly knows *how* to smile: for as soon as any thing catches her fancy, her voice immediately bursts her lips, and widens her mouth to its full extent. Forgive me, Lucy. I believe I am spiteful.

Lady Betty and Miss Clements, in low voices, praised me for my presence of mind, as they called it, in checking Sir Hargrave's forwardness.

Just here, Lucy, I laid down my pen, and stept to the glass, to see whether I could not please myself with a wise frown or two; at least with a solemnity of countenance, that, occasionally, I might dash with it my childishness of look; which certainly encouraged this freedom of Miss Barnevelt. But I could not please myself. My muscles have

never been used to any-thing but smiling: so favoured, so beloved, by every one of my friends; a heart so grateful for all their favours—How can I learn now to frown; or even long to look grave?

All this time the scholar sat *uneasily-careless.*

In the mean time Mr. Reeves, having sent for from his study (his house being near) Bishop Burnet's History of his own Times, said he would, by way of moderatorship in the present debate, read them a passage, to which he believed all parties would subscribe: and then read what I will transcribe for you from the conclusion to that performance:

'I have often thought it a great error to waste young gentlemen's years so long in learning Latin, by so tedious a grammar. I know those who are bred to the profession in literature, must have the Latin correctly; and for that the rules of grammar are necessary: but these rules are not at all requisite to those, who need only so much Latin, as thoroughly to understand and delight in the Roman authors and poets.

'But suppose a youth had, either for want of memory, or of application, an incurable aversion to Latin, his education is not for that to be despaired of: there is much noble knowledge to be had in the English and French languages: geography, history, chiefly that of our own country, the knowledge of nature, and the more *practical* parts of the mathematics (if he has not a genius for the *demonstrative)* may make a gentleman very knowing, though he has not a word of Latin' [And why, I would fain know, said Mr. Reeves, not a gentlewoman?]. 'There is a fineness of thought, and a nobleness of expression, indeed, in the Latin authors' [This makes for your argument, Mr. Walden] 'that

will make them the entertainment of a man's whole life, if he once understands and reads them with delight' [Very well, said Mr. Walden !] But if this cannot be attained to, I would not have it reckoned that the education of an ill Latin scholar is to be given over.'

Thus far the bishop.

We all know, proceeded Mr. Reeves, how well Mr. Locke has treated this subject. And he is so far from discouraging the fair sex from learning languages, that he gives us a method in his Treatise of Education, by which a mother may not only learn Latin herself, but be able to teach it to her *son*. Be not, therefore, ladies, ashamed either of your talents or acquirements. Only take care, you give not up any knowledge that is more laudable in your sex, and more useful, for learning; and then I am sure, you will, you *must*, be the more agreeable, the more suitable companions for it, to men of sense. Nor let any man have so narrow a mind as to be apprehensive for his own prerogative, from a learned woman. A woman who does not behave the *better* the more she knows, will make her husband uneasy, and will think as well of herself, were she utterly illiterate; nor would any argument convince her of her duty. Do not men marry with their eyes open? And cannot they court whom they please? A conceited, a vain mind in a woman cannot be hidden. Upon the whole, I think it may be fairly concluded, that the more a woman knows, as well as a man, the wiser she will generally be; and the more regard she will have for a man of sense and learning.

Here ended Mr. Reeves.

Mr. Walden was silent; yet shrugged up his shoulders, and seemed unsatisfied.

The conversation then took a more general turn,

in which every one bore a part. *Plays, fashion, dress,* and the *public entertainments,* were the subjects.

Miss Cantillon, who had till now sat a little uneasy, seemed resolved to make up for her silence: but did not shine at all where she thought herself most intitled to make a figure.

But Miss Clements really shone. Yet in the eye of some people, what advantages has folly in a pretty woman, over even wisdom in a plain one? Sir Hargrave was much more struck with the pert things spoken without fear or wit, by Miss Cantillon, than with the just observations that fell from the lips of Miss Clements.

Mr. Walden made no great figure on these fashionable subjects; no, not on that of the *plays:* for he would needs force into conversation, with a preference to our Shakespeare, his Sophocles, his Euripides, his Terence; of the merits of whose performances, how great soever, no one present but Mr. Reeves and himself could judge, except by translations.

Sir Hargrave spoke well on the subject of the reigning fashions, and on modern dress, so much the foible of the present age.

Lady Betty and Mrs. Reeves spoke very properly of the decency of dress, and propriety of fashions, as well as of public entertainments.

Miss Clements put in here also with advantage to herself.

Nor would Mr. Walden be excluded this topic. But, as the observations he made on it, went no deeper than what it was presumed he might have had at second-hand, he made a worse figure here, than he did on his more favourite subject. He was, however, heard, till he was for bringing in his Spartan jacket (I forget what he called it) descending

only to the knees of the women, in place of hoops; and the Roman toga for the men.

Miss Barnevelt broke in upon the scholar; but by way of approbation of what he said; and went on with subjects of heroism, without permitting him to rally and proceed, as he seemed inclined to do.

After praising what he said of the Spartan and Roman dresses, she fell to enumerating *her* heroes, both antient and modern. Achilles, the savage Achilles, charmed her. Hector, however, was a good *clever* man: yet she could not bear to think of his being so mean as to intreat a favour, though of her heroic Achilles. He deserved for it, she said, to have his corpse dragged round the Trojan walls at the wheels of the victor's chariot. Alexander the Great was her dear creature; and Julius Cæsar was *a very pretty fellow*.

These were Miss Barnevelt's *antient* heroes.

Among the moderns, the great Scanderbeg, our Henry V. Henry IV. of France, Charles XII. of Sweden, and the great Czar Peter, who my grandfather used to say was worth them all, were her favourites.

All this while honest Mr. Singleton had a smile at the service of every speaker, and a loud laugh always ready at the baronet's.

Sir Hargrave seemed not a little pleased with the honest man's complaisance; and always directed himself to *him*, when he was disposed to be merry.

Laughing, you know, my dear, is almost as catching as gaping, be the subject ever so silly: and more than once he shewed by his eyes, that he could have devoured Miss Cantillon for generally adding her affected Te-he (twisting and bridling behind her fan) to his louder Hah, hah, hah, hah.

What a length have I run! How does this narrative letter-writing, if one is to enter into minute and characteristic descriptions and conversations, draw one on!—I will leave off for the present: yet have not quite dismissed the company (though I have done with the argument) that I thought to have parted with before I concluded this letter.

But I know I shall please my uncle in the *livelier* parts of it, by the handle they will give him against his poor niece. My grandmother, and aunt Selby, will be pleased, and so will *you*, my Lucy, with *all* I write, for the writer's sake: such is their and your partial love to

Their and your ever-grateful

HARRIET.

LETTER XIV.

MISS BYRON. IN CONTINUATION.

By the time tea was ready, Lady Betty whisperingly congratulated me on having made so considerable a conquest, as she was sure I had, by Sir Hargrave's looks.

She took notice also of a gallant expression of his, uttered, as she would have it, with an earnestness that gave it a meaning beyond a common compliment. My cousin Reeves had asked Miss Clements if she could commend to me an honest, modest man-servant? *I*, said Sir Hargrave, *can*. I myself shall be proud to wear Miss Byron's livery; and that for life.

Miss Cantillon, who was within hearing of this, and had seemed to be highly taken with the baronet, could hardly let her eyes be civil to me; and

yet her really pretty mouth, *occasionally*, worked itself into forced smiles, and an affectation of complaisance.

Sir Hargrave was extremely obsequious to me all the tea-time; and seemed in *earnest* a little uneasy in himself: and after tea he took my cousin Reeves into the next room; and there made your Harriet the subject of a serious conversation; and desired his interest with me.

He prefaced his declaration to Mr. Reeves, with assuring him, that he had sought for an opportunity more than once, to be admitted into my company, when he was last at Northampton; and that he had not intruded himself then into this company, had he not heard I was to be there.

He made protestations of his honourable views; which looked as if he thought they might be doubted, if he had not given such assurances. A tacit implication of an imagined superiority, as well in consequence as fortune.

Mr. Reeves told him, It was a rule which all my relations had set themselves, not to interfere with my choice, let it be placed on whom it would.

Sir Hargrave called himself a *happy man* upon this intelligence.

He afterwards, on his return to company, found an opportunity, as Mrs. Reeves and I were talking at the further part of the room, in very vehement terms, to declare himself to me an admirer of perfections of his own creation; for he volubly enumerated many; and begged my permission to pay his respects to me at Mr. Reeves's.

Mr. Reeves, Sir Hargrave, said I, will receive what visits he pleases in his own house. I have no permission to give.

He bowed, and made me a very high compliment, taking what I said for a permission.

What, Lucy, can a woman do with these self-flatterers?

Mr. Walden took his leave: Sir Hargrave his: he wanted, I saw, to speak to me, at his departure; but I gave him no opportunity.

Mr. Singleton seemed also inclined to go, but knew not how; and having lost the benefit of their example by his irresolution, sat down.

Lady Betty then repeated her congratulations. How many ladies, said she, and fine ladies too, have sighed in secret for Sir Hargrave. You will have the glory, Miss Byron, of fixing the wavering heart of a man who has done, and is capable of doing, a great deal of mischief.

The ladies, madam, said I, who can sigh in secret for such a man as Sir Hargrave, must either deserve a great deal of pity, or none at all.

Sir Hargrave, said Miss Cantillon, is a very fine gentleman; and so looked upon, I assure you: and he has a noble estate.

It is very happy, replied I, that we do not all of us like the same person. I mean not to disparage Sir Hargrave; but I have compassion for the ladies who sigh for him in secret. One woman only can be his wife; and perhaps she will not be one of those who sigh for him; especially were he to know that she does.

Perhaps not, replied Miss Cantillon: but I do assure you, that *I* am not one of those who sigh for Sir Hargrave.

The ladies smiled.

I am glad of it, madam, said I. Every woman should have her heart in her own keeping, till she can find a worthy man to bestow it upon.

Miss Barnevelt took a tilt in heroics.

Well, ladies, said she, you may talk of love and love as much as you please; but it is my glory, that

I never knew what love was. I, for my part, like a *brave* man, a *gallant* man: one in whose loud praise fame has cracked half a dozen trumpets. But as to your milksops, your dough-baked lovers, who stay at home and strut among the women, when glory is to be gained in the martial field; I despise them with all my heart. I have often wished that the foolish heads of such fellows as these were cut off in time of war, and sent over to the heroes to fill their cannon with, when they batter in breach, by way of saving ball.

I am afraid, said Lady Betty, humouring this romantic speech, that if the heads of such persons were as soft as we are apt sometimes to think them, they would be of as little service abroad as they are at home.

O, madam, replied Miss Barnevelt, there is a good deal of lead in the heads of these fellows. But were their brains, said the shocking creature, if any they have, made to fly about the ears of an enemy, they would serve both to blind and terrify him.

Even Mr. Singleton was affected with this horrid speech; for he clapt both his hands to his head, as if he were afraid for his brains.

Lady Betty was very urgent with us to pass the evening with her; but we excused ourselves; and when we were in the coach, Mr. Reeves told me, that I should find the baronet a very troublesome and resolute lover, if I did not give him countenance.

And so, Sir, said I, you would have me do, as I have heard many a good woman *has* done, marry a man, in order to get rid of his importunity.

And a certain cure too, let me tell you, cousin, said he, smiling.

We found at home, waiting for Mr. Reeves's re-

turn, Sir John Allestree: a worthy sensible man, of plain and unaffected manners, upwards of fifty.

Mr. Reeves mentioning to him our past entertainment and company, Sir John gave us such an account of Sir Hargrave, as helped me not only in the character I have given of him, but let me know that he is a very dangerous and enterprising man. He says, that laughing and light as he is in company, he is malicious, ill-natured, and designing; and sticks at nothing to carry a point on which he has once set his heart. He has ruined, Sir John says, three young creatures already under vows of marriage.

Sir John spoke of him as a managing man, as to his fortune: he said, That though he would, at times, be lavish in the pursuit of his pleasures; yet that he had some narrownesses which made him despised, and that most by those for whose regard a good man would principally wish; his neighbours and tenants.

Could you have thought, my Lucy, that this laughing, fine-dressing man, could have been a man of malice; of resentment; of enterprize; a cruel man? Yet Sir John told two very bad stories of him, besides what I have mentioned, which prove him to be all I have said.

But I had no need of these stories to determine me against receiving his addresses. What I saw of him was sufficient; though Sir John made no manner of doubt (on being told by Mr. Reeves, in confidence, of his application to him for leave to visit me) that he was quite in earnest; and, making me a compliment, added, that he knew Sir Hargrave was inclined to marry; and the more, as one half of his estate, on failure of issue male, would go at his death to a distant relation whom he hated; but for no other reason than for admonishing

him, when a school-boy, on his low and mischievous pranks.

His estate, Sir John told my cousin, is full as considerable as reported. And Mr. Reeves, after Sir John went away, said, What a glory will it be to you, cousin Byron, to reform such a man, and make his great fortune a blessing to multitudes; as I am sure would be your endeavour to do, were you Lady Pollexfen!

But, my Lucy, were Sir Hargrave king of one half of the globe, I would not go to the altar with him.

But if he be a very troublesome man, what shall I say to him? I can deal pretty well with those, who will be kept at arms length; but I own, I should be very much perplexed with resolute wretches. The civility I think myself obliged to pay every one who professes a regard for me, might subject me to inconveniencies with violent spirits, which, protected as I have been by my uncle Selby, and my good Mr. Deane, I never yet have known, O my Lucy, to what evils, but for that protection, might not I, a sole, an independent young woman, have been exposed? Since men, many men, are to be looked upon as savages, as wild beasts of the desert; and a single and independent woman they hunt after as their proper prey.

To have done with Sir Hargrave for the present, and I wish I may be able to say for ever; Early in the morning, a billet was brought from him to Mr. Reeves, excusing himself from paying him a visit that morning (as he had intended) by reason of the sudden and desperate illness of a relation, whose seat was near Reading, with whom he had large concerns, and who was desirous to see him before he died. As it was impossible that he could return under three days, which, he said, would

appear as three years to him, and he was obliged to set out that moment; he could not dispense with himself for putting in his *claim*, as he called it, to Miss Byron's favour, and confirming his declaration of yesterday. In very high strains, he professed himself her admirer; and begged Mr. and Mrs. Reeves's interest with her. One felicity, he said, he hoped for from his absence, which was, that as Miss Byron, and Mr. and Mrs. Reeves, would have time to consider of his offers; he presumed to hope he should not be subjected to a repulse.

And now, my Lucy, you have before you as good an account as I can give you of my two new lovers.

How I shall manage with them, I know not: but I begin to think that those young women are happiest, whose friends take all the trouble of this sort upon *them*; only consulting their daughters' inclinations as preliminaries are adjusting.

My friends indeed pay a high compliment to my discretion, when they so generously allow me to judge for myself: and we young women are fond of being our own mistresses: but I must say, that to *me* this compliment has been, and is, a painful one; for two reasons; That I cannot but consider their goodness as a task upon me, which requires my utmost circumspection, as well as gratitude; and that they have shewn more generosity in dispensing with their authority, than I have done whenever I have acted so as to appear, though *but* to appear, to accept of the dispensation: let me add besides, that now, when I find myself likely to be addressed to by mere strangers, by men who grew not into my knowledge insensibly, as our neighbours Greville, Fenwick, and Orme, did, I cannot but think it has the appearance of confidence, to stand out to receive,

as a creature uncontroulable, the first motions to an address of this awful nature. Awful indeed might it be called, were one's heart to incline towards a particular person.

Allow me then for the future, my revered grand-mamma, and you, my beloved and equally honoured uncle and aunt Selby, allow me to refer myself to you, if any person offers to whom I may happen to have no strong objections. As to Mr. Fowler, and the baronet, I must *now* do as well as I can with them. It is much easier for a young woman to say *no*, than *yes*. But for the time to come I will not have the assurance to act for myself. I know your partiality for your Harriet too well, to doubt the merit of your recommendation.

As Mr. and Mrs. Reeves require me to shew them what I write, they are fond of indulging me in the employment: you will therefore be the less surprised that I write so much in so little a time. *Miss Byron is in her closet; Miss Byron is writing;* is an excuse sufficient, they seem to think, to every-body, because they allow it to be one to them: but besides, I know they believe they oblige you all by the opportunity they so kindly give me of shewing my duty and love where so justly due.

I am, however, surprised at casting my eye back. Two sheets! and such a quantity before!—Unconscionable, say; and let me, echo-like, repeat,

Unconscionable

HARRIET BYRON.

Sunday night.

Letters from Northamptonshire, by Farmer Jenkins! I kiss the seals. What agreeable things, now, has my Lucy to say to her Harriet? Disagreeable ones she cannot write, if all my beloved friends are well.

LETTER XV.

MISS BYRON. IN CONTINUATION.

Monday, February 6.

AND so my uncle Selby, you tell me, is making observations in writing, on my letters; and waits for nothing more to begin with me, than my conclusion of the conversations that offered at Lady Betty's.

And is it expected that I should go on furnishing weapons against myself?

It is.

Well; with all my heart. As long as I can contribute to his amusement; as long as my grandmamma is pleased and diverted with what I write, as well as with his pleasantries on her girl; I will proceed.

Well, but will you not, my Harriet, methinks you ask, write with less openness, with more reserve, in apprehension of the rod which you know hangs over your head?

Indeed I will not. It is my glory, that I have not a thought in my heart which I would conceal from any one whom it imported to know it, and who would be gratified by the revealing of it. And yet I am a little chagrined at the wager which you tell me my uncle has actually laid with my grandmamma, that I shall not return from London with a sound heart.

And does he teaze *you*, my Lucy, on this subject, with reminding you of your *young* partiality for Captain Duncan, in order to make good his assertion of the susceptibility of us all?

Why so let him. And why should you deny, that you *were* susceptible of a natural passion? You

must not be prudish, Lucy. If you are *not*, all his raillery will lose its force.

What better assurance can I give to my uncle, and to all my friends, that if I were caught, I would own it, than by advising you *not* to be ashamed to confess a sensibility which is no disgrace, when duty and prudence are our guides, and the object worthy?

Your man indeed was *not* worthy, as it proved; but he was a very specious creature; and you knew not his bad character, when you suffered *liking* to grow into *love*.

But when the love-fever was at the height, did you make any-body uneasy with your passion? Did you run to the woods and groves to record it on the barks of trees?—No!—You sighed in silence indeed: but it was but for a little while. I got your secret from you; not, however, till it betrayed itself in your pined countenance; and then the man's discovered unworthiness, and your own discretion, enabled you to conquer a passion to which you had given way, supposing it unconquerable, because you thought it would cost you pains to contend with it.

As to myself, you know I have hitherto been on my guard. I have been careful ever to shut the door of my heart against the blind deity, the moment I could imagine him setting his incroaching foot on the *threshold*, which I think *liking* may be called. Had he once gained entrance, perhaps I might have come off but simply.

But I hope I am in the less danger of falling in love with *any* man, as I can be civil and courteous to *all*. When a stream is sluiced off into several channels, there is the less fear that it will overflow its banks. I really think I never shall be in love with any-body, till duty directs inclination:

Excuse me, Lucy. I do now-and-then, you know, get into a boasting humour. But then my punishment, as in most other cases, follows my fault: my uncle pulls me down, and shews me, that I am not half so good as the rest of my friends think me.

You tell me, that Mr. Greville will be in London in a very few days. I can't help it. He pretends business, you say; and (since that calls him up) intends to give himself a month's pleasure in town, and to take his share of the public entertainments. Well, so let him. But I hope that I am not to be either his business or entertainment. After a civil neighbourly visit, or so, I hope, I shall not be tormented with him.

What happened once betwixt Mr. Fenwick and him gave me pain enough; exposed me enough, surely! A young woman, though without her own fault, made the occasion of a rencounter between two men of fortune, must be talked of too much for her own liking, or she must be a strange creature. What numbers of people has the unhappy rashness of those two men brought to stare at me? And with what difficulty did my uncle and Mr. Deane bring them into so odd a compromise, as they at last came into, to torment me, as I may call it, by joint consent, notwithstanding all I could say to them; which was the only probable way, shocking creatures! to prevent murder?

But, Lucy, what an odd thing is it in my uncle, to take hold of what I said in one of my letters, that I had a good mind to give you a sketch of what I might suppose the company at Lady Betty's would say of your Harriet, were each to write her character to their confidents or correspondents, as she has done theirs to you!

I think there is a little concealed malice in my uncle's command: but I obey.

To begin then—Lady Betty, who owns she thinks favourably of me, I will suppose would write to her Lucy, in such terms as these: But shall I suppose every one to be so happy, as to have her Lucy?

'Miss Byron, of whom you have heard Mr. Reeves talk so much, discredits not, in the *main*, the character he has given her. We must allow a little, you know, for the fondness of relationship.

'The girl has had a good education, and owes all her advantages to it. But it is a country and bookish one: and that won't do *every*-thing for one of our sex, if *any*-thing. Poor thing! she *never* was in town before!—But she seems docile, and, for a country girl, is tolerably genteel: I think, therefore, I shall receive no discredit by introducing her into the beau monde.'

Miss Clements, perhaps, agreeable to the goodness of her kind heart, would have written thus:

'Miss Byron is an agreeable girl: she has invited me to visit her; and I hope I shall like her better and better. She has, one may see, kept worthy persons' company; and I dare say, will preserve the improvement she has gained by it. She is lively and obliging: she is young; not more than twenty; yet looks rather younger, by reason of a country bloom, which, however, misbecomes her not; and gives a modesty to her first appearance, that prepossesses one in her favour. What a cast-away would Miss Byron be, if knowing so well, as she seems to know, what the duty of others is, she would forget her own!'

Miss Cantillon would perhaps thus write:

'There was Miss Harriet Byron of Northamptonshire; a young woman in whose favour report has been very lavish. I can't say that I think her so *very* extraordinary: yet she is well enough for a country girl. But though I do not impute to her a *very* pert look, yet if she had not been set up for something beyond what she is, by all her friends, who, it seems, are *excessively* fond of her, she might have had a more humble opinion of herself than she seems to have when she is set a talking. She may, indeed, make a figure in a country assembly; but in the London world she must be not a little awkward, having never been here before.

'I take her to have a great deal of art. But to do her justice, she has no bad complexion: that, you know, is a striking advantage: but to me she has a babyish look, especially when she smiles; yet I suppose she has been told that her smiles become her; for she is always smiling—so like a simpleton, I was going to say!

'Upon the whole, I see nothing so engaging in her as to have made her the idol she is with every-body—And what little beauty she has, it cannot last. For my part, were I a man, the clear brunette—But you will think I am praising myself.'

Miss Barnevelt would perhaps thus write to her Lucy—To *her* Lucy!—Upon my word I will not let her have a Lucy—She shall have a brother *man* to write to, not a woman, and he shall have a fierce name.

We will suppose, that she also had been describing the rest of the company:

'Well but, my dear Bombardino, I am now to give you a description of Miss Byron. 'Tis the softest, gentlest, smiling rogue of a girl—I protest, I could five or six times have kissed her, for what she said, and for the manner she spoke in—for she has been used to prate; a favourite child in her own family, one may easily see that. Yet so *prettily* loth to speak till spoken to!—Such a blushing little rogue!—'Tis a dear girl, and I wished twenty times as I sat by her, that I had been a man for her sake. Upon my honour, Bombardino, I believe if I had, I should have caught her up, popt her under one of my arms, and run away with her.'

Something like this, my Lucy, did Miss Barnevelt once say.

Having now dismissed the women, I come to Mr. Singleton, Mr. Walden, and Sir Hargrave.

Mr. Walden (himself a Pasquin) would thus perhaps have written to his Marforio:

'The first lady, whom, as the greatest stranger, I shall take upon me to describe, is Miss Harriet Byron of Northamptonshire. In her person she is not disagreeable; and most people think her pretty. But, what is prettiness? Why, nevertheless, in a woman, prettiness is—*pretty:* What other word can I so fitly use of a person, who, though a little *sightly*, cannot be called a beauty?

'I will allow, that we men are not wrong in admiring *modest* women for the graces of their *persons:* but let them *be* modest; let them return the compliment, and revere *us* for our capaciousness of *mind:* and so they will, if they are brought up to know their own weakness, and that they are

but domestic animals of a superior order. Even ignorance, let me tell you, my Marforio, is pretty in a woman. Humility is one of their principal graces. Women hardly ever set themselves to acquire the knowledge that is proper to men, but they neglect for it, what more indispensably belongs to women. To have them come to their husbands, to their brothers, and even to their lovers when they have a mind to know any-thing out of their way, and beg to be instructed and informed, inspireth them with the becoming humility which I have touched upon, and giveth us importance with them.

'Indeed, my Marforio, there are very few topics that arise in conversation among men, upon which women ought to open their lips. Silence becomes them. Let them therefore hear, wonder, and improve, in silence. They are naturally contentious, and lovers of contradiction' [something like this Mr. Walden once threw out: and you know who, my Lucy—but I am afraid—has said as much] 'and shall we qualify them to be disputants against ourselves?

'These reflections, Marforio, are not foreign to my subject. This girl, this Harriet Byron, is applauded for a young woman of reading and observation. But there was another lady present, Miss Clements, who (if there be any merit to a *woman* in it) appeareth to me to excel her in the compass of her reading; and that upon the strength of her own diligence and abilities; which is not the case with this Miss Harriet; for she, truly, hath had some pains taken with her by her late grandfather, a man of erudition, who had his education among *us*. This old gentleman, I am told, took it into his head, having no grandson, to give this girl a *bookish* turn; but he wisely stopt at her mother-

tongue; only giving her a smattering in French and Italian.

'As I saw that the eyes of every one were upon her, I was willing to hear what she had to say for herself. Poor girl! she will suffer, I doubt, for her speciousness. Yet I cannot say, all things considered, that she was *very* malapert: that quality is yet to come. She is young.

'I therefore trifled a little with her: and went further than I generally choose to go with the reading species of women, in order to divert an inundation of nonsense and foppery, breaking in from one of the company; Sir Hargrave Pollexfen: of whom more anon.

'You know, Marforio, that a man, when he is provoked to fight with an overgrown boy, hath every-body against him: so hath a scholar who engageth on learned topics with a woman. The sex must be flattered at the expence of truth. Many things are thought to be pretty from the mouth of a woman, which would be egregiously weak and silly proceeding from that of a man. His very eminence in learning, on such a contention, would tend only to exalt her, and depreciate himself. As the girl was every-body's favourite, and as the baronet seemed to eye her with particular regard, I spared her. A man would not, you know, spoil a girl's fortune.'

But how, Lucy, shall I be able to tell what I imagine Sir Hargrave would have written? Can I do it, if I place him in the light of a lover, and not either underdo his character as such, or incur the censure of vanity and conceit?

Well, but are you sure, Harriet, methinks my uncle asks, that the baronet is really and truly so egregiously smitten with you, as he pretended he was?

Why, ay! That's the thing, Sir!

You girls are so apt to take in earnest the compliments made you by men!—

And so we are. But our credulity, my dear Sir, is a greater proof of *our* innocence, than men's professions are of *their* sincerity. So, let losers speak, and winners laugh.

But let him be in jest, if he will. In jest or in earnest, Sir Hargrave must be extravagant, I ween, in love-speeches. And that I may not be thought wholly to decline this part of my task, I will suppose him professing with Hudibras, after he has praised me beyond measure, for graces of his own creation;

> The sun shall now no more dispense
> His own, but *Harriet's* influence.
> Where-e'er she treads, her feet shall set
> The primrose and the violet:
> All spices, perfumes, and sweet powders,
> Shall borrow from her breath their odours:
> Worlds shall depend upon her eye,
> And when she frowns upon them, die.

And what if I make him address me, by way of *apostrophe*, shall I say? (writing to his friend) in the following strain?

> My faith [*my friend*] is *adamantine*
> As chains of destiny, I'll maintain;
> True, as Apollo ever spoke,
> Or oracle from heart of oak:
> Then shine upon me but benignly,
> With that one, and that other pigsnye;
> The sun and day shall sooner part,
> Than love or you shake off my heart.

Well, but what, my Harriet, would honest Mr. Singleton have written, had he written about you?

Why thus, perhaps, my Lucy: and to his grandmother; for she is living.

'We had rare *fun* at dinner, and after dinner, my grandmother.

'There was one Miss *Barnevelt*, a fine tall *portly* young lady.

'There was Miss *Clements*, not handsome, but very learned, and who, as was easy to perceive, could hold a *good argument*, on occasion.

'There was Miss *Cantillon;* as pretty a young lady as one would wish to behold in a *summer's day*.

'And there was one Miss *Byron*, a Northamptonshire lady, whom I never saw before.

'There was Mr. *Walden*, a most famous scholar. I thought him very entertaining; for he talked of learning, and such-like things; which I know not so much of as I wish I did; because my want of knowing a little *Latin* and *Greek* has made my understanding *look less* than other men's. O my grandmother! what a *wise man* would the being able to talk Latin and Greek have made me! And yet I thought that now-and-then Mr. Walden made too great a *fuss* about *his*.

'But there was a rich and noble baronet; richer than *me*, as they say, a great deal; Sir *Hargrove Pollexfun*, if I spell his name right. A charming man! and charmingly dressed! and so many fine things he said, and was so merry, and so facetious, that he did nothing but laugh, *as a man may say!* And I was as merry as *him* to the full. Why not?

'O my grandmother! What with the talk of the young country lady, that same Miss Byron; for they put her upon talking a great deal; what with the famous scholar; who, however, being a learned man, could not be so merry as us; what with Sir Hargrave (I could live and die with Sir Hargrave: you never knew, my grandmother, such a bright man as Sir Hargrave), and what with one thing, and what with another, we *boxed it about*, and had

rare *fun*, as I told you—So that when I got home, and went to bed, I did nothing but dream of being in the same company, and three or four times waked myself with laughing.'

There, Lucy!—Will this do for Mr. Singleton? It is not much out of character, I assure you.

Monday afternoon.

THIS knight, this Sir Rowland Meredith!—He is below, it seems; his nephew with him; Sir Rowland, my Sally tells me, in his gold button and button-hole coat, and full-buckled wig; Mr. Fowler as spruce as a bridegroom.—What shall I do with Sir Rowland?

I shall be sorry to displease the good old man; yet how can I avoid it?

Expect another letter next post: and so you will, if I did not bid you; for have I missed one yet?

Adieu, my Lucy.

H. B.

LETTER XVI.

MISS BYRON TO MISS SELBY.

Monday night, Tuesday morn, Feb. 6 & 7.

SIR Rowland and his nephew, tea being not quite ready, sat down with my cousins; and the knight, leaving Mr. Fowler little to say, expatiated so handsomely on his nephew's good qualities, and great passion for me, and on what he himself proposed to do for him in addition to his own fortune, that my cousins, knowing I liked not the gentlemen in our own neighbourhood, and thought very indifferently

of Sir Hargrave, were more than half inclined to promote the addresses of Mr. Fowler; and gave them both room to think so.

This favourable disposition set the two gentlemen up. They were impatient for tea, that they might see me.

By the time I had sealed up my letters, word was brought me that tea was ready; and I went down.

The knight, it seems, as soon as they heard me coming, jogged Mr. Fowler.—Nephew, said he, pointing to the door, see what you can say to the primrose of your heart!—This is now the primrose season with us in Caermarthen, Mr. Reeves.

Mr. Fowler, by a stretch of complaisance, came to meet and introduce me to the company, though at home. The knight nodded his head after him, smiling; as if he had said, Let my nephew alone to galant the lady to her seat.

I was a little surprised at Mr. Fowler's approaching me the moment I appeared, and with his taking my hand, and conducting me to my seat, with an air; not knowing how much he had been raised by the conversation that had passed before

He bowed. I courtesied, and looked a little sillier than ordinary, I believe.

Your servant, young lady, said the knight. Lovelier, and lovelier, by mercy! How these blushes become that sweet face!—But, forgive me, madam, it is not my intent to dash you.

Writing, Miss Byron, all day! said Mrs. Reeves. We have greatly missed you.

My cousin seemed to say this, on purpose to give me time to recover myself.

I have blotted several sheets of paper, said I, and had just concluded.

I hope, madam, said the knight, leaning forward

his whole body, and peering in my face under his bent brows, that *we* have not been the cause of hastening you down.

I stared. But as he seemed not to mean any thing, I would not help him to a meaning by my own over-quickness.

Mr. Fowler had done an extraordinary thing, and sat down, hemmed, and said nothing; looking however, as if he was at a loss to know whether he or his uncle was expected to speak.

The cold weather was then the subject; and the two gentlemen rubbed their hands, and drew nearer the fire, as if they were the colder for talking of it. Many hems passed between them, now the uncle looking on the nephew, now the nephew on the uncle: at last they fell into talk of their new-built house at Caermarthen, and the furnishing of it.

They mentioned afterwards their genteel neighbourhood, and gave the characters of half-a-dozen people, of whom none present but themselves ever heard; but all tending to shew how much they were valued by the best gentry in Caermarthenshire.

The knight then related a conversation that had once passed between himself and the late Lord Mansell, in which that nobleman had complimented him on an estate of a clear 3000l. a-year, besides a good deal of ready cash, and with supposing that he would set up his nephew when at age (for it was some years ago) as a representative for the county. And he repeated the *prudent* answer he gave his lordship, disavowing such a design, as no better than a gaming *propensity*, as he called it, which had ruined many a fair estate.

This sort of talk, in which his nephew *could* bear a part (and indeed they had it all between them), held the tea-time; and then having given them-

selves the consequence they had seemed to intend, the knight, drawing his chair nearer to me, and winking to his nephew, who withdrew, began to set forth to me the young gentleman's good qualities; to declare the passion he had for me; and to beg my encouragement of so worthy, so *proper*, and so *well-favoured* a young man; who was to be his sole heir; and for whom he would do such things, on my account, as, during his life, he would not do for any other woman *breathing*.

There was no answering a discourse so serious with the air of levity which it was hardly possible to avoid assuming on the first visit of the knight.

I was vexed that I found myself almost as bashful, as silly, and as silent, as if I had thoughts of encouraging Mr. Fowler's addresses. My cousins seemed pleased with my bashfulness. The knight I once thought, by the tone of his voice, and his hum, would have struck up a Welsh tune, and danced for joy.

Shall I call in my kinsman, madam, to confirm all I have said, and to pour out his whole soul at your feet? My boy is bashful: but a little favour from that sweet countenance will make a man of him. Let me, let me, call in my boy. I will go for him myself; and was going.

Let me say one word, Sir Rowland—before Mr. Fowler comes in—before you speak to him—You have explained yourself unexceptionably. I am obliged to you and Mr. Fowler for your good opinion: but this can never be.

How, madam! Can *never* be!—I will allow that you shall take time for half-a-dozen visits, or so, that you may be able to judge of my nephew's qualities and understanding, and be convinced from his own mouth, and heart, and soul, as I may say, of his love for you. No need of time for *him*. He,

poor man! is fixed, immoveably fixed: but say you will take a week's time, or so, to consider what you *can* do, what you *will* do—and that's all I at present crave, or indeed, madam, can *allow* you.

I cannot doubt *now*, Sir Rowland, of what my mind will be a week hence, as to this matter.

How, madam!—Why we are all in the *suds*, then! —Why, Mr. Reeves, Mrs. Reeves! Whew! with a half-whistle—Why, madam, we shall, at this rate, be all *untwisted!*—But (after a pause) by mercy I will not be thus answered!—Why, madam, would you have the conscience to break my poor boy's heart?—Come, be as gracious as you look to be—Give me your hand—[he snatched my hand. In respect to his years I withdrew it not] and give my boy your heart.—Sweet soul! Such sensible, such good-natured mantlings!—Why you can't be cruel, if you would!—Dear lady! say you will take a little time to consider of this matter. Don't repeat those cruel words, "It can never be."—What have you to object to my boy?

Mr. Fowler, both by character and appearance, Sir Rowland, is a worthy man. He is a modest man; and modesty—

Well, and so he is—Mercy! I was afraid that his modesty would be an objection—

It cannot, Sir Rowland, with a modest woman. I love, I revere, a modest man: but, indeed, I cannot *give* hope, where I mean not to *encourage* any.

Your objection, madam, to my nephew?—You must have seen something in him you dislike.

I do not easily *dis-like*, Sir; but then I do not easily *like:* and I never will marry any man, to whom I cannot be more than indifferent.

Why, madam, he adores you—He—

That, Sir, is an objection, unless I could return his love. My gratitude would be endangered.

Excellent notions!—With these notions, madam, you could not be ungrateful.

That, Sir, is a risque I will never run. How many bad wives are there, who would have been good ones, had they not married either to their dislike, or with indifference? Good beginnings, Sir Rowland, are necessary to good progresses, and to happy conclusions.

Why so they are. But beginnings that are *not* bad, with good people, will make no *bad* progresses, no *bad* conclusions.

No bad is not *good*, Sir Rowland; and in such a world as this, shall people lay themselves open to the danger of acting contrary to their duty? Shall they suffer themselves to be bribed, either by conveniencies, or superfluities, to give their hands, and leave their hearts doubtful or indifferent? It would not be honest to do so.

You told me, madam, the first time I had the honour to see you, that you were absolutely and *bonâ fide* disengaged—

I told you truth, Sir.

Then, madam, we will *not* take your denial. We will persevere. We will *not* be discouraged! What a *deuce!* Have I not heard it said, that *faint heart never won fair lady*?

I never would give an absolute denial, Sir, were I to have the least doubt of my mind. If I could balance, I would consult my friends, and refer to them; and their opinion should have due weight with me. But for your *nephew's* sake, Sir Rowland, while his esteem for me is young and conquerable, urge not this matter farther. I would not give pain to a worthy heart.

As I hope for mercy, madam, so well I like your notions, that if you will be my niece, and let me but

converse with you once a day, I will be content with 100l. a-year, and settle upon you all I have in the world.

His eyes glistened; his face glowed; an honest earnestness appeared in his countenance.

Generous man! Good Sir Rowland! said I. I was affected. I was forced to withdraw.

I soon returned, and found Sir Rowland, his handkerchief in his hand, applying very earnestly to my cousins: and they were so much affected too, that on his resuming the subject to me, they could not help putting in a word or two on his side of the question.

Sir Rowland then proposed to call in his nephew, that he might speak for himself. My boy may be over-awed by love, madam: true love is always fearful: yet he is no milksop, I do assure you. To *men* he has courage. How he will behave to *you*, madam, I know not; for, really, notwithstanding that sweetness of aspect, which I should have thought would have led one to say what one would to you (in modesty I mean) I have a kind of I-cannot-tell-what for you myself. Reverence it is not neither, I think—I only reverence my Maker—And yet I believe it is. Why, madam, your face is one of God Almighty's wonders in a little compass!—Pardon me—You may blush—But *be* gracious now!—Don't shew us, that, with a face so encouragingly tender, you have a hard heart.

O Sir Rowland, you are an excellent advocate: But pray tell Mr. Fowler—

I will call him in—And was rising.

No, don't. But tell Mr. Fowler, that I regard him on a double account; for his own worth's sake, and for his uncle's: but subject me not, I once more entreat you, to the pain of repulsing a worthy man. I

repeat, that I am under obligation to him for the value he has for me: I shall be under more, if he will accept of my thanks as all I have to return.

My dear Miss Byron, said Mr. Reeves, oblige Sir Rowland so far, as to take a little time to consider—

God bless you on earth and in heaven, Mr. Reeves, for this! You are a good man—Why, ay, take a little time to consider—God bless you, madam, take a little time. Say you will consider. You know not what a man of understanding my nephew is. Why, madam, modest as he is, and awed by his love for you, he cannot shew half the good sense he is master of.

Modest men must have merit, Sir. But how can you, Mr. Reeves, make a difficult task more difficult? And yet all is from the goodness of your heart. You see Sir Rowland thinks me cruel: I have no cruelty in my nature. I love to oblige. I wish to match *you* in generosity, Sir Rowland.—Ask me for any-thing but *myself*, and I will endeavour to oblige you.

Admirable, by mercy! Why every-thing you say, instead of making me desist, induces me to persevere. There is no yielding up such a prize, if one can obtain it. Tell me, Mr. Reeves, where there is such another woman to be had, and we may give up Miss Byron: but I hope she will consider of it.—Pray, madam—But I will call in my nephew. And out he went in haste, as if he were afraid of being again forbidden.

Mean time my cousins put it to me—But before I could answer them, the knight, followed by his nephew, returned.

Mr. Fowler entered, bowing in the most respectful manner. He looked much more dejected than when he approached me at my first coming down. His

uncle had given him a hint of what had passed between us.

Mr. Fowler and I had but just sat down, when the knight said to Mr. Reeves (but took him not by the button, as in his first visit) one word with you, Sir— Mr. Reeves, one word with you, if you please.

They withdrew together; and presently after Mrs. Reeves went out at the other door; and I was left alone with Mr. Fowler.

We both sat silent for about three or four minutes. I thought I ought not to begin; Mr. Fowler knew not how. He drew his chair nearer to me; then sat a little farther off; then drew it nearer again; stroked his ruffles, and hemmed two or three times; and at last, You cannot, madam, but observe my confusion, my concern, my, my, my confusion!—It is all owing to my reverence, my respect, my *reverence*, for you—hem!—He gave two gentle hems, and was silent.

I could not enjoy the modest man's awkwardness. —Every feature of his face working, his hands and his knees trembling, and his tongue faltering, how barbarous had I been, if I could.—O Lucy, what a disqualifier is love, if such agitations as those are the natural effects of *that* passion!

Sir Rowland has been acquainting me, Sir, said I, with the good opinion you have of me. I am very much obliged to you for it. I have been telling Sir Rowland—

Ah, madam! Say not what you have been telling Sir Rowland: he has hinted it to me. I must indeed confess my unworthiness; yet I cannot forbear aspiring to your favour. Who that knows what will make him the happiest of men, however unworthy he may be, can forbear seeking his happiness? I can only say, I am the most miserable of men, if—

Good Mr. Fowler, interrupted I, indulge not a hope that cannot be answered. I will not pretend to say, that I should not merit your esteem, if I could return it; because, to whomsoever I should give my hand, I would make it a point of duty to deserve his affection: but for that very reason, and that I may have no temptation to do otherwise, I must be convinced in my own mind that there is not a man in the world whom I could value more than him I chose.

He sighed. I was *assured*, madam, said he, that your heart was absolutely disengaged: on that assurance I founded my presumptuous hope.

And so it is, Mr. Fowler. I have never yet seen a man whom I could wish to marry.

Then, madam, may I not hope, that time, that my assiduities, that my profound reverence, my unbounded love—

O Mr. Fowler, think me not either insensible or ungrateful. But time, I am sure, can make no alteration in this case. I can only esteem *you*, and that from a motive which I think has selfishness in it, because you have shewn a regard for *me*.

No selfishness in this motive, madam: it is amiable gratitude. And if all the services of my life, if all the adoration—

I have a very indifferent notion of sudden impressions, Mr. Fowler: but I will not question the sincerity of a man I think so worthy. Sir Rowland has been very urgent with me. He has wished me to take time to consider. I have told him I *would*, if I could doubt: but that I cannot. For *your own* sake therefore, let me entreat you to place your affections elsewhere. And may you place them happily!

You have, madam, I am afraid, seen men whom you could prefer to me—

Our acquaintance, Mr. Fowler, is very short. It

would be no wonder if I had. Yet I told you truly, that I never yet saw a man whom I could wish to marry.

He looked down, and sighed.

But, Mr. Fowler, to be still more frank and explicit with you, as I think you a very worthy man; I will own, that were any of the gentlemen I have hitherto known to be my lot, it must be, I think, in compassion (in *gratitude*, I had almost said) one (who nevertheless it cannot be) who has professed a love for me ever since I was a child. A man of honour, of virtue, of modesty; such a man as I believe Mr. Fowler is. His fortune indeed is not so considerable as Sir Rowland says yours will be: but, Sir, as there is no other reason on the comparison, why I should prefer Mr. Fowler to him, I should think the worse of myself as long as I lived, if I gave a preference over such a tried affection to fortune only. And now, Sir, I expect that you will make a generous use of my frankness, lest the gentleman, if you should know him, may hear of it. And this I request for *his sake*, as I think I never can be his; as for *yours* I have been thus explicit.

I can only say, that I am the most miserable of men!—But will you, madam, give me leave to visit Mr. Reeves now-and-then?

Not on my account, Mr. Fowler. Understand it so; and if you see me, let it be with indifference, and without expectation from me; and I shall always behave myself to you, as to a man who has obliged me by his good opinion.

He bowed: sat in silence: pulled out his handkerchief.—I pitied him.

But let me ask all you, my friends, who love Mr. Orme, Was I wrong? I think I never could love Mr. Fowler, as a wife ought to love her husband—May he meet with a worthy woman who can! And

surely so good, so modest a man, and of such an ample fortune, easily may: while it may be my lot, if ever I marry, to be the wife of a man, with whom I may not be so happy, as either Mr. Orme or Mr. Fowler would probably make me, could I prevail upon myself to be the wife of either.—O my uncle! often do I reflect on your mercer's shop.

Mr. Fowler arose, and walked disconsolately about the room, and often profoundly, and, I believe (*not* Greville-like) sincerely sighed. His motion soon brought in the knight and Mr. Reeves at one door, and Mrs. Reeves at the other.

Well! What news? What news?—Good, I hope, said the knight with spread hands—Ah my poor boy! Thus a-la-mort! Surely, madam—

There he stopt, and looked wistfully at me; then at my cousins—Mr. Reeves, Mrs. Reeves, speak a good word for my boy. The heart that belongs to that countenance cannot be adamant surely.—Dear young lady, let your power be equalled by your mercy.

Mr. Fowler, Sir Rowland, has too much generosity to upbraid me, I dare say. Nor will you think me either perverse or ungenerous, when he tells you what has passed between us.

Have you given him hope, then? God grant it, though but distant hope! Have you said you will consider—Dear, blessed lady!—

O Sir, interrupted I, how good you are to your nephew! How worthily is your love placed on him! What a proof is it of *his* merit, and of the goodness of *your* heart!—I shall always have an esteem for you both!—Your excuse, Sir Rowland: yours, Mr. Fowler. Be so good as to allow me to withdraw.

I retired to my own apartment, and throwing myself into a chair, reflected on what had passed; and

after a while recollected myself to begin to write it down for you.

As soon as I had withdrawn, Mr. Fowler with a sorrowful heart, as my cousins told me, related all that I had said to him.

Mr. Reeves was so good as to praise me for what he called my generosity to Mr. Orme, as well as for my frankness and civility to Mr. Fowler.

That was the deuce of it, Sir Rowland said, that were they to have no remedy, they could not find any fault in me to comfort themselves with.

They put it over and over to my cousin, Whether time and assiduity might not prevail with me to change my mind? And whether an application to my friends in the country might not, on setting every-thing fairly before them, be of service? But Mr. Reeves told them, that now I had opened so freely my mind, and had spoken so unexpectedly, yet so gratefully, in favour of Mr. Orme, he feared there could be no hopes.

However, both gentlemen, at taking leave, recommended themselves to Mr. and Mrs. Reeves for their interests; and the knight vowed that I should not come off so easily.

So much, and adieu, my Lucy, for the addresses of worthy Mr. Fowler. Pray, however, for your Harriet, that she may not draw a worse lot.

Tuesday morning.

At a private concert last night with my cousins and Miss Clements; and again to be at a play this night; I shall be a racketer, I doubt.

Mr. Fowler called here this morning. Mrs. Reeves and I were out on a visit. But Mr. Reeves was at home, and they had a good deal of discourse about me. The worthy man spoke so despairingly of his

success with me, that I hope, for his own sake, I shall hear no more of his addresses; and with the more reason, as Sir Rowland will in a few days set out for Caermarthen.

Sir Rowland called afterwards: but Mr. Reeves was abroad; and Mrs. Reeves and I were gone to Ludgate-hill, to buy a gown, which is to be made up in all haste, that I may the more fashionably attend Lady Betty Williams to some of the public entertainments. I have been very extravagant: but it is partly my cousin's fault. I send you inclosed a pattern of my silk. I thought we were high in the fashion in Northamptonshire; but all my clothes are altering, that I may not *look frightful*, as the phrase is.

But shall I as easily get rid of the baronet, think you, as I hope I have of Mr. Fowler? He is come to town, and by his own invitation (in a card to Mr. Reeves) is to be here to-morrow afternoon. What signifies my getting out of the way? He will see me at another time; and I shall increase my own difficulties and his consequence, if he thinks I am afraid of him.

LETTER XVII.

MISS BYRON. IN CONTINUATION.

Wednesday night.

Sir Hargrave came before six o'clock. He was richly dressed. He asked for my cousin Reeves. I was in my closet, writing. He was not likely to be the better received for the character Sir John Allestree gave of him.

He excused himself for coming so early, on the score of his impatience, and that he might have a

little discourse with them, if I should be engaged, before tea-time.

Was I within?—I was.—Thank heaven!—I was very good.

So he seemed to imagine that I was at home, in compliment to him.

Shall I give you, from my cousins, an account of the conversation before I went down? You know Mrs. Reeves is a nice observer.

He had had, he told my cousins, a most uneasy time of it, ever since he saw me. The devil fetch him, if he had had one hour's rest. He never saw a woman before whom he could love as he loved me. By his soul, he had no view, but what was strictly honourable.

He sometimes sat down, sometimes walked about the room, strutting, and now-and-then adjusting something in his dress that nobody else saw wanted it. He gloried in the happy prospects before him: not but he knew I had a little *army* of admirers: but as none of them had met with encouragement from me, he hoped there was room for him to flatter himself that *he* might be the happy man.

I told you, Mr. Reeves, said he, that I will give you *carte blanche* as to settlements. What I do for so prudent a woman, will be doing for myself. I am not used, Mr. Reeves, to boast of my *fortune* [then, it seems, he went up to the glass, as if his *person* could not fail of being an *additional* recommendation;] but I will lay before you, or before any of Miss Byron's friends (Mr. Deane, if she pleases—) my rent-rolls. There never was a better-conditioned estate. She shall live in town, or in the country, as she thinks fit; and in the latter, at which of my seats she pleases. I know I shall have no will but hers. I doubt not *your* friendship, Mr. Reeves. I hope for *yours*, madam. I shall have great plea-

sure in the alliance I have in view, with every individual of your family—As if he would satisfy them of his friendship, in the near relation, as the only matter that could bear a doubt.

Then he ran on upon the part I bore in the conversation at Lady Betty Williams's—By his soul, *only* the wisest, the wittiest, the most gracefully modest of women—*that was all*—Then Ha, ha, ha, hah, poor Walden! What a silly fellow! He had *caught a Tartar!*—Ha, ha, ha, hah—Shaking his head and his gay sides: Devil take him if he ever saw a *prig* so fairly taken in!—but I was a sly little rogue!—He saw that!—By all that's good, I must myself *sing small* in *her* company!—I will never meet at hard-edge with her—If I did—(and yet I have been thought to carry a good one) I should be confoundedly gapped, *I can see that.* But, continued he, as a woman is more a husband's than a man is a wife's [Have all the men this prerogative-notion, Lucy? You know it is a better man's] I shall have a pride worth boasting of, if I can call such a jewel mine. Poor Walden!—Rot the fellow!—I warrant he would not have so knowing a wife for the world. —Ha, ha, ha, hah! He is right: it is certainly right for such narrow pedants to be afraid of learned women!—Methinks, I see the fellow, conjurer like, circumscribed in a narrow circle, putting into Greek what was better expressed in English; and forbidding every one's approach within the distance of his wand! Hah, hah, hah!—Let me die, if I ever saw a tragi-comical fellow better handled!—Then the faces he made—Did you ever, Mr. Reeves, see in your life, such a parcel of disastrous faces made by one man?

Thus did Sir Hargrave, laughingly, run on: nor

left he hardly any-thing for my cousins to say, or to do, but to laugh *with* him, and to smile *at* him.

On a message that tea was near ready, I went down. On my entering the room, he addressed me with an air of kindness and freedom: Charming Miss Byron! said he, I hope you are all benignity and compassion. You know not what I have suffered since I had the honour to see you last; bowing very low; then rearing himself up, holding back his head; and seemed the taller for having bowed.

Handsome fop! thought I to myself. I took my seat; and endeavoured to look easy and free, as usual; finding something to say to my cousins, and to him. He begged that tea might be postponed for half an hour; and that, before the servants were admitted, I would hear him relate the substance of the conversation that had passed between him and Mr. and Mrs. Reeves.

Had not Sir Hargrave intended me an honour, and had he not a very high opinion of the efficacy of eight thousand pounds a-year in an address of this kind, I dare say, he would have supposed a little more prefacing necessary: but, after he had told me, in a few words, how much he was attracted by my character before he saw me, he thought fit directly to refer himself to the declaration he had made at Lady Betty Williams's, both to Mr. Reeves and myself; and then talked of large settlements; boasted of his violent passion; and besought my favour with the utmost earnestness.

I would have played a little female trifling upon him, and affected to take his professions only for polite raillery, which men call *making love* to young women, who perhaps are frequently but too willing to take in earnest what the wretches mean but in jest; but the fervour with which he *renewed* (as he

called it) his declarations, admitted not of fooling; and yet his *volubility* might have made questionable the sincerity of his declarations. As therefore I could not think of encouraging his addresses, I thought it best to answer him with openness and unreserve.

To seem to question the sincerity of such professions as you make, Sir Hargrave, might appear to you as if I wanted to be assured. But be pleased to know that you are directing your discourse to one of the plainest-hearted women in England; and you may therefore expect from me nothing but the simplest truth. I thank you, Sir, for your good opinion of me; but I cannot encourage your addresses.

You *cannot*, madam, *encourage my addresses!* And express yourself so seriously! Good heaven! [He stood silent a minute or two, looking upon me, and upon himself; as if he had said, Foolish girl! knows she whom she refuses?] I have been assured, madam, recovering a little from his surprise, that your affections are not engaged. But surely it must be a mistake: some happy man—

Is it, interrupted I, a necessary consequence, that the woman who cannot receive the addresses of Sir Hargrave Pollexfen, must be engaged?

Why, madam—As to that—I know not what to say—But a man of my fortune, and I hope, not *absolutely* disagreeable either in person or temper; of *some* rank in life—He paused; then resuming—What, madam, if you are as much in earnest as you seem, can be your objection? Be so good as to name it, that I may know, whether I cannot be so happy as to get over it?

We do not, we *cannot*, all like the same person. Women, I have heard say, are very capricious. Per-

haps I am so. But there is a *something* (we cannot always say what) that attracts or disgusts us.

Disgusts! madam—*Disgusts!* Miss Byron.

I spoke in general, Sir: I dare say, nineteen women out of twenty would think themselves favoured in the addresses of Sir Hargrave Pollexfen.

But *you,* madam, are the twentieth that I must love: and be so good as to let me know—

Pray, Sir, ask me not a reason for a *peculiarity.* Do you not yourself shew a peculiarity in making me the twentieth?

Your merit, madam—

It would be vanity in me, Sir, interrupted I, to allow a force to that plea. You, Sir, may have more merit, than perhaps the man I may happen to approve of better; but—*shall* I say? (Pardon me, Sir) You do not—You do not (hesitating)—hit my fancy—Pardon me, Sir.

If pardon depends upon *my* breath, let me die if I do!—*Not hit your fancy,* madam! [And then he looked upon himself all around] *Not hit your fancy,* madam!

I told you, Sir, that you must not expect anything from me but the simplest truth. You do me honour by your good opinion; and if my own heart were not, in this case, a very determined one, I would answer you with more politeness. But, Sir, on such an occasion as this, I think it would not be honourable, it would not be just, to keep a man in an hour's suspense, when I am in none myself.

And are you then (angrily) so determined, Miss Byron?

I am, Sir.

Confound me!—And yet I am enough confounded!—But I will not take an answer so contrary to my hopes. Tell me, madam, by the since-

rity which you boast; Are you not engaged in your affections? Is there not some one happy man, whom you prefer to all men?

I am a free person, Sir Hargrave. It is no impeachment of sincerity, if a free person answers not every question that may be put to her, by those to whom she is not accountable.

Very true, madam. But as it is no impeachment of your freedom to answer this question either negatively or affirmatively, and as you glory in your frankness, let me beseech you to answer it; Are you, madam, or are you not, disengaged in your affections?

Excuse me, Sir Hargrave; I don't think you are intitled to an answer to this question. Nor, perhaps, would you be determined by the answer I should make to it, whether negative or affirmative.

Give me leave to say, madam, that I have some little knowledge of Mr. Fenwick and Mr. Greville, and of their addresses. They have both owned, that no hopes have you given them; yet declare that they *will* hope. Have you, madam, been as explicit to them, as you are to me?

I have, Sir.

Then *they* are not the men I have to fear—Mr. Orme, madam—

Is a good man, Sir.

Ah! madam!—But why then will you not say that you are engaged?

If I own I *am;* perhaps it will not avail me: it will still much less, if I say I am *not*.

Avail you! dear Miss Byron! I have pride, madam. If I had not, I should not aspire to *your* favour. But give me leave to say [and he reddened with anger] that my fortune, my descent, and my ardent affection for you, considered, it may not *dis*-avail you. Your relations will at least think so, if I

may have the honour of your consent for applying to them.

May your fortune, Sir Hargrave, be a blessing to you! It *will*, in proportion as you do good with it. But were it twice as much, that *alone* would have no charms for me. My duties would be increased with my power. *My* fortune is an humble one; but were it less it would satisfy my ambition while I am single; and if I marry, I shall not desire to live beyond the estate of the man I choose.

Upon my soul, madam, you *must* be mine. Every word you speak adds a rivet to my chains.

Then, Sir, let us say no more upon this subject.

He then laid a title to my gratitude from the passion he avowed for me.

That is a very poor plea, Sir, said I, as you yourself would think, I believe, were one of our sex, whom you could not like, to claim a return of love from you upon it.

You are too refined, surely, madam.

Refined! what meant the man by the word in this place?

I believe, Sir, we differ very widely in many of our sentiments.

We will not differ in *one*, madam, when I know yours; such is the opinion I have of your prudence, that I will adopt them, and make them my own.

This may be *said*, Sir, but there is hardly a man in the world that, saying it, would keep his word: nor a woman, who ought to *expect* he should.

But you will allow of my visits to your cousins, madam?

Not on my account, Sir.

You will not withdraw if I come? You will not refuse seeing me?

As you will be no visitor of mine, I must be allowed to act accordingly. Had I the least thought

of encouraging your addresses, I would deal with you as openly as is consistent with my notions of modesty and decorum.

Perhaps, madam, from my gay behaviour at Lady Betty Williams's, you think me too airy a man. You have doubts of my sincerity: you question my honour.

That, Sir, would be to injure myself.

Your *objections*, then, dear madam? Give me, I beseech you, some one material objection.

Why, Sir, should you urge me thus?—When I have no *doubt*, it is unnecessary to look into my own mind for the particular reasons that move me to disapprove of the addresses of a gentleman whose professions of regard for me, notwithstanding, intitle him to civility and acknowledgment.

By my soul, madam, this is very comical:

> I do not like thee, Dr. *Fell*;
> The reason why, I cannot tell—
> But I don't like thee, Dr. *Fell*.

Such, madam, seem to me to be your reasons.

You are very pleasant, Sir. But let me say, that if you are in earnest in your professions, you could not have quoted any-thing more against you than these humorous lines; since a dislike of such a nature as is implied by them, must be a dislike arising from something resembling a natural aversion; whether just or not is little to the purpose.

I was not aware of that, replied he: but I hope yours to me is not such a one.

Excuse me, cousin, said I, turning to Mrs. Reeves: but I believe I have talked away the tea-time.

I think not of tea, said she.

Hang tea, said Mr. Reeves.

The devil fly away with the tea-kettle, said Sir Hargrave; let it not have entrance here, till I have said what I have further to say. And let me tell you, Miss Byron, that though you may not have a dying lover, you shall have a resolute one: for I will not cease pursuing you till you are mine, or till you are the wife of some other man.

He spoke this fiercely, and even rudely. I was disgusted as much at his manner, as with his words.

I cannot, replied I, but congratulate myself on *one* felicity, since I have been in your company, Sir; and that is, That in this whole conversation (and I think it much too long) I have not one thing to reproach myself with, or be sorry for.

Your servant, madam, bowing—But I am of the *contrary* opinion. By heaven, madam, [with anger and an air of insolence] I think you have pride, madam—

Pride, Sir!

Cruelty.—

Cruelty, Sir!

Ingratitude, madam.

I thought it was staying to be insulted. All that Sir John Allestree had said of him came into my head.

Hold, Sir (for he seemed to be going on): *pride, cruelty, ingratitude,* are crimes black enough. If you think I am guilty of them, excuse me that I retire for the benefit of recollection.—And, making a low courtesy, I withdrew in haste. He besought me to return; and followed me to the stair's foot.

He shewed *his* pride, and his ill-nature too, before my cousins, when I was gone. He bit his lip: he walked about the room; then sitting down, he lamented, defended, accused, and re-defended himself; and yet besought their interest with me.

He was greatly disturbed, he owned, that with *such*

honourable *intentions*, with so much POWER to make me happy, and *such* a WILL to do so, he should be refused; and this without my assigning one reason for it.

And my cousins (to whom he again referred on that head) answering him, that they believed me disengaged in my affections—D— him, he said, if he could account *then* for my behaviour to him.

He, however, threatened Mr. Orme: who (*if any*) he said, was the man I favoured. I had acknowledged, that neither Greville nor Fenwick were. My proud repulse had stung him, he owned. He begged, that they would send for me down in their names.

They liked not the humour he seemed to be in well enough to comply with his request; and he sent up in his own name.

But I returned my compliments: I was busy in writing [and so I was—to you, my Lucy]; I hoped Sir Hargrave, and my cousins, would excuse me. I put *them* in to soften my refusal.

This still more displeased him. He besought *their* pardon; but he would haunt me like a ghost. In spite of man and devil I should be his, he had the presumption to repeat: and went away with a flaming face.

Don't you think, my dear, that my cousin Reeves was a little too mild in his own house; as I am under his guardianship? But perhaps he was the more patient for that very reason; and he is one of the best-natured men in England. And then 8000l. a-year! —Yet why should a man of my cousin's independent fortune—But grandeur will have its charms!

Thus did Sir Hargrave confirm all that Sir John Allestree had said of his bad qualities: and I think I am more afraid of him than ever I was of any man

before. I remember, that *mischievous* is one of the bad qualities Sir John attributed to him: and *revengeful* another. Should I ever see him again on the same errand, I will be more explicit, as to my being absolutely disengaged in my affections, if I can be so without giving him hope, lest he should do private mischief to some one on my account. Upon my word, I would not, of all the men I have ever seen, be the wife of Sir Hargrave Pollexfen.

And so much for this first visit of his. I wish his pride may be enough piqued to make it the last.

But could you have thought he would have shewn himself so soon?—Yet he had paraded so much, before I went down, to my cousins, and so little expected a direct and determined repulse, that a man of his self-consequence might, perhaps, be allowed to be the more easily piqued by it.

Lady Betty has sent us notice, that on Thursday next, there will be a ball at the Opera house in the Hay-market. My cousins are to choose what theirs will be; but she insists, that my dress shall be left to her. I am not to know what it is to be, till the day before, or the very day. If I like it not, she will not put me to any expence about it.

You will easily imagine, upon such an alternative, I shall approve of it, be it what it will. I have only requested, that I may not be so remarkably dressed, as to attract the eyes of the company: if I am, I shall not behave with any tolerable presence of mind.

LETTER XVIII.

MISS BYRON. IN CONTINUATION.

Friday, February 10.

ONE of Mr. Greville's servants has just been here, with his master's compliments. So the wretch is come to town. I believe I shall soon be able to oblige him: he wishes, you know, to provoke me to say I *hate* him.

Surely I draw inconveniencies upon myself by being so willing to pay civility for esteem. Yet it is in my nature to do so, and I cannot help it without committing a kind of violence on my temper. There is no merit, therefore, in my behaviour, on such occasions. Very pretty self-deception!—I study my own ease, and (before I consider) am ready to call myself patient, and good humoured, and civil, and to attribute to myself I know not how many kind and complaisant things; when I ought, in modesty, to distinguish between the *virtue* and the *necessity*.

I never was uncivil, as I call it, but to one young gentleman; a man of quality (you know who I mean); and that was, because he wanted me to keep secret his addresses to me, for family considerations. The young woman who engages to keep her lover's secrets in this particular, is often brought into a plot against herself, and oftener still against those to whom she owes unresterved honour and duty: and is not such a conduct also an indirect confession, that you know you are engaging in something wrong and unworthy?

Mr. Greville's arrival vexes me. I suppose it will not be long before Mr. Fenwick comes too. I have a good mind to try to like the modest Mr. Orme the better, in spite.

Saturday morning, February 11.

I shall have nothing to trouble you with, I think, but scenes of courtship. Sir Rowland, Sir Hargrave, and Mr. Greville, all met just now at our breakfast-time.

Sir Rowland came first; a little before breakfast was ready. After enquiries of Mr. Reeves whether I held in the same mind, or not; he desired to have the favour of one quarter of an hour's conversation with me alone.

Methinks I have a value for this honest knight. Honesty, my Lucy, is good sense, politeness, amiableness, all in one. An honest man must appear in every light with such advantages, as will make even *singularity* agreeable. I went down directly.

He met me; and taking my not-withdrawn hand, and peering in my face, Mercy! said he; the same kind aspect! The same sweet and obliging countenance! How can this be? But you *must* be gracious! You *will*. Say you will.

You must not urge me, Sir Rowland. You will give me pain if you lay me under a necessity to repeat—

Repeat what? Don't say a refusal. Dear madam, don't say a refusal! Will you not save a life? Why, madam, my poor boy is absolutely and *bonâ fide* broken-hearted. I would have had him come with me: but, no, he could not bear to teaze the beloved of his soul! Why there's an instance of love now! Not for all his hopes, not for his life's sake could he bear to teaze you! None of your fluttering Jack a-dandy's, now, would have said this! And let not such succeed, where modest merit fails!—Mercy! You are struck with my plea! Don't, don't, God bless you now, don't harden your heart on my observation. I was resolved to set out in a day or two:

but I will stay in town, were it a month, to see my boy made happy. And, let me tell you, I would not wish him to be happy unless he could make you so.—Come, come—

I was a little affected. I was silent.

Come, come, be gracious; be merciful. Dear lady, be as good as you look to be. One word of comfort for my poor boy. I could kneel to you for one word of comfort—Nay, I *will* kneel; taking hold of my other hand, as he still held one; and down on his knees dropt the honest knight.

I was surprised. I knew not what to say, what to do. I had not the courage to attempt to raise him. Yet to see a man of his years, and who had given himself a claim to my esteem, kneel; and, with glistening eyes, looking up to me for *mercy*, as he called it, on his *boy*; how was I affected!—But, at last, Rise, dear Sir Rowland, rise, said I: you call out for mercy to me; yet have none upon me. O how you distress me!

I would have withdrawn my hands; but he held them fast. I stamped in tender passion [I am *sure* it was in *tender* passion] now with one foot, now with the other; Dear Sir Rowland, rise; I cannot bear this. I beseech you rise [and down I dropt involuntarily on one knee], What can I say? Rise, dear Sir, on *my* knee I beg of you kneel not to me: indeed, Sir, you greatly distress me! Pray let go my hands.

Tears ran down his cheeks—And *do* I distress you, madam! And *do* you vouchsafe to kneel to me?—I will *not* distress you: for the *world* I will not distress you.

He arose, and let go my hands. I arose too abashed. He pulled out his handkerchief, and hastening from me to the window, wiped his eyes. Then turning to me, What a fool I am! What a

mere child I make of myself! How can I blame my boy? O madam! have you not one word of comfort to send by me to my boy? Say, but, you will see him. Give him leave to wait on you: yet, poor soul! (wiping his eyes again) he would not be able to say a word in his own behalf.—Bid me bring him to you: bid us come together.

And so I could, and so I would, Sir Rowland, if no other expectations were to be formed than those of civility. But I will go farther to shew my regard for you, Sir: let me be happy in your friendship, and good opinion: let me look upon you as my father: let me look upon Mr. Fowler as my brother: I am not so happy, as to have either father or brother. And let Mr. Fowler own me as his sister and every visit you make me, you will both, in these characters, be dearer to me than before.—But, O my father! (already will I call you father!) urge not your daughter to an impossibility!

Mercy! Mercy! What will become of me! What will become of my boy, rather!

He turned from me, with his handkerchief at his eyes again, and even sobbed: Where are all my purposes! Irresistible lady!—But must I give up my hopes! Must my boy be told—And yet, do you call me *father;* and do you plead for my indulgence as if you were my *daughter?*

Indeed I do; indeed I must. I have told Mr. Fowler, with so much regard for him, as an honest, as a worthy man—

Why that's the weapon that wounds him, that cuts him to the heart! Your gentleness, your openness—And *are* you determined? *Can* there be no hope?

Mr. *Fowler* is my *brother,* Sir; and *you* are my *father.*—Accept me in those characters.

Accept you! Mercy! Accept you!—Forgive me,

madam, (catching my hand, and pressing it with his lips) you do me honour in the appellation: but if your mind should change on consideration, and from motives of pity—

Indeed, indeed, Sir Rowland, it cannot change.

Why then, I, as well as my nephew, must acquiesce with your pleasure. But, madam, you don't know what a worthy creature he is. I will not, however, teaze you.—But how, but how, shall I see Mr. Reeves? I am ashamed to see him with this baby in my face.

And I, Sir Rowland, must retire before I can appear. Excuse me, Sir (withdrawing); but I hope you will breakfast with us.

I will drink tea with you, madam, if I can make myself fit to be seen, were it but to claim you for my *daughter:* but yet had much rather you would be a farther remove in relation: would to God you would let it be *niece!*

I courtesied, as a daughter might do, parting with her real father; and withdrew.

And now, my Lucy, will you not be convinced that one of the greatest pains (the loss of dear friends excepted) that a grateful mind can know, is to be too much beloved by a worthy heart, and not to be able to return his love?

My sheet is ended. With a new one I will begin another letter.—Yet a few words in the margin—I tell you not, my dear, of the public entertainments to which Lady Betty is continually contriving to draw me out. She intends by it to be very obliging, and *is* so: but my present reluctance to go so very often, must not be overcome, as it possibly would be too easily done, were I to give way to the temptation. If it be, your Harriet may turn gadder, and never be easy but when she is forming parties, or giving way to them, that may make the

home, that hitherto has been the chief scene of her pleasures, undelightful to her. Bad habits are sooner acquired than shaken off, as my grand-mamma has often told us.

LETTER XIX.

MISS BYRON. IN CONTINUATION.

WHO would have thought that a man of Sir Rowland's time of life, and a woman so young as I, could have so much discomposed each other? I obeyed the summons to breakfast, and entered the room at one door, as he came in at the other. In vain had I made use of the short retirement to conceal my emotion from my cousins. They also saw Sir Rowland's by his eyes, and looked at him, at me, and at each other.

Mercy! said Sir Rowland, in an accent that seemed between crying and laughing, You, you, you, madam, are a surprising lady! I, I, I never was so affected in my life. And he drew the back of his hand cross first one eye, then the other.

O Sir Rowland, said I, you are a good man. How affecting are the visible emotions of a manly heart!

My cousins still looked as if surprised; but said nothing.

O my cousins, said I, I have found a father in Sir Rowland; and I acknowledge a brother in Mr. Fowler.

Best of women! Most excellent of creatures! And do you *own* me? He snatched my hand, and kissed it. What pride do you give me in this open acknowledgment! If it must not be *niece*, why then I will endeavour to rejoice in my *daughter*, I

think. But yet, my boy, my poor boy—But you are all goodness: and with him I say, I must not teaze you.

What you have been saying to each other alone, said Mrs. Reeves, I cannot tell; but I long to know.

Why, madam, I will tell you—if I know how—You must know, that I, that I, came as an ambassador extraordinary from my sorrowful boy: yet not desired; not sent; I came of my own accord, in hopes of getting one word of comfort, and to bring matters on before I set out for Caermarthen.

The servant coming in, and a loud rap, rap, rap, at the door, put a stop to Sir Rowland's narrative. In apprehension of company, I breathed on my hand, and put it to either eye: and Sir Rowland hemmed twice or thrice, and rubbed his, the better to conceal their redness, though it made them redder than before. He got up, looked in the glass: would have sung. *Toll, doll*—Hem, said he; as if the muscles of his face were in the power of his voice. Mercy! All the infant still in my eye—*Toll, doll*—Hem!—I would sing it away, if I could.

Sir Hargrave entered bowing, scraping to me, and with an air not ungraceful.

Servant, Sir, said the knight (to Sir Hargrave's silent salute to him) bowing, and looking at the baronet's genteel morning dress, and then at his own—Who the deuce is *he!* whispering to Mr. Reeves; who then presented each to the other by name.

The baronet approached me; I have, madam, a thousand pardons to ask—

Not one, Sir.

Indeed I have—And most heartily do I beg—

You are forgiven, Sir—

But I will not be so *easily* forgiven.

Mercy! whispered the knight to Mr. Reeves, I don't like'n. Ah! my poor boy: no wonder at this rate!—

You have not much to fear, Sir Rowland (re-whispered my cousin) on this gentleman's account.

Thank you, thank you—And yet 'tis a fine figure of a man! whispered again Sir Rowland: nay, if she can withstand *him*—But a word to the wise, Mr. Reeves!—Hem!—I am a little easier than I was..

He turned from my cousin with such an air, as if from contrasted pleasure and pain, he would again have sung *Toll, doll.*

The servant came in with the breakfast: and we had no sooner sat down, as before, than we were alarmed by another modern rapping. Mr. Reeves was called out, and returned, introducing Mr. Greville.

Who the deuce is *he?* whispered to me Sir Rowland (as he sat next me) before Mr. Reeves could name him.

Mr. Greville profoundly bowed to me. I asked after the health of all our friends in Northamptonshire.

Have you seen Fenwick, madam?

No, Sir.

A dog! I thought he had played me a trick. I missed him for three days—But (in a low voice) if you have not seen him, I have stolen a march upon *him!*—Well, I had rather ask *his* pardon than he should ask *mine.* I rejoice to see you well, madam! (raising his voice)—But what!—looking at my eyes.

Colds are very rife in London, Sir—

I am glad it is no worse; for your grandmamma, and all friends in the country, are well.

I have found a father, Mr. Greville (referring to Sir Rowland) since I came to town. This good gentleman gives me leave to call him father.

No *son!*—I hope, Sir Rowland, you have no son, said Mr. Greville: the relation comes not about that way, I hope. And laughed, as he used to do, at his own smartness.

The very question, I was going to put, by my soul, said the baronet.

No!—said the knight: but I have a *nephew*, gentlemen—a very pretty young fellow! And I have this to say before ye all (I am downright Dunstable) I had much rather call this lady *niece*, than *daughter*. And then the knight forced a laugh, and looked round upon us all.

O Sir Rowland, replied I, I *have* uncles, more than one—I *am* a niece: but I have not had for many years till now the happiness of a father.

And do you own me, madam, before all this gay company?—The first time I beheld you, I remember I called you a perfect paragon. Why, madam, you are the most excellent of women!

We are so much convinced of this, Sir Rowland, said the baronet, that I don't know, but Miss Byron's choosing you for a *father*, instead of an *uncle*, may have saved two or three throats.

And then he laughed. His laugh was the more seasonable, as it softened the shockingness of his expression.

Mr. Greville and Sir Hargrave had been in company twice before in Northamptonshire at the races: but now-and-then looked upon each other with envious eyes; and once or twice were at cross-purposes: but my particular notice of the knight made all pass lightly over.

Sir Rowland went first away. He claimed one word with his *daughter*, in the character of a *father*.

I withdrew with him to the further end of the room.

Not *one* word of comfort? not *one* word, madam? —to my boy? whispered he.

My compliments (speaking low) to my *brother*, Sir. I wish him as well and as happy as I think he deserves to be.

Well but—Well but—

Only remember, Sir Rowland, that you act in character. I followed you hither, on the strength of your authority, as a *father;* I beg, Sir, that you will preserve to me that character.

Why God in heaven bless my daughter, if *only* daughter you can be. Too well do I understand you! I will see how my poor nephew will take it. If it *can* be no otherwise, I will prevail upon him, I think, to go down with me to Caermarthen for a few months.—But as to those two fine gentlemen, madam—It would grieve me ('tis a folly to deny it) to say I have seen the man that is to supplant my nephew.

I will act in character, Sir Rowland: as your *daughter*, you have a right to know my sentiments on this subject—You have not *yet* seen the man you seem to be afraid of.

You are all goodness, madam—my *daughter*—and I cannot bear it!

He spoke this loud enough to be heard; and Mr. Greville and the baronet both, with some emotion, rose, and turned about to us.

Once more, Sir Rowland, said I, my compliments to my *brother*—Adieu!

God in heaven bless you, madam, that's all—Gentlemen, your servant. Mrs. Reeves, your most obedient humble servant. Madam, to me, you will allow me, and my nephew too, one more visit, I hope, before I set out for Caermarthen.

I courtesied, and joined my cousins. Away went

the knight, brushing the ground with his hat, at his going out. Mr. Reeves waited on him to the outward door.

'Bye, 'bye, to you, Mr. Reeves—with some emotion (as my cousin told me afterwards)—A wonderful creature! By mercy, a wonderful creature!—I go away with my heart full; yet am pleased; I know not why neither, that's the jest of it—'Bye, Mr. Reeves, I can stay no longer.

An odd mortal! said the *man of the town*—But he seems to know on which side his bread is buttered.

A whimsical old fellow! said the *man of the country*. But I rejoice that he has not a *son;* that's all.

A good many frothy things passed not worth relating. I wanted them both to be gone. They seemed each to think it time; but looked as if neither cared to leave the other behind him.

At last, Mr. Greville, who hinted to me, that he knew I loved not too long an intrusion, bowed, and, politely enough, took his leave. And then the baronet began, with apologizing for his behaviour at taking leave on his last visit.

Some gentlemen, I said, had one way, some another, of expressing themselves on particular occasions: he had thought fit to shew me what was his.

He seemed a little disconcerted. But quickly recovering himself, he could not indeed excuse himself, he said, for having then called me *cruel*—Cruel, he hoped he should not find me—*Proud*—I knew not what pride was. *Ungrateful*—I could not be guilty of ingratitude. He begged me to forgive his peremptoriness—He had hoped (as he had been assured, that my affections were absolutely disengaged) that the proposals he had to make, would have been acceptable; and so positive a refusal, without any one reason assigned, and on his first visit, had indeed hurt his pride (he owned, he said,

that he had some pride) and made him forget that he was addressing himself to a woman who deserved and met with the veneration of every one who approached her. He next expressed himself with apprehensions on Mr. Greville's arrival in town. He spoke slightly of him. Mr. Greville, I doubt not, will speak as slightly of Sir Hargrave. And if I believe them both, I fancy I shall not injure either.

Mr. Greville's arrival, I said, ought not to concern me. He was to do as he thought fit. I was only desirous to be allowed the same free agency that I was ready to allow to others.

That could not be, he said. Every man who saw me, must wish me to be his; and endeavour to obtain his wishes.

And then making vehement professions of love, he offered me large settlements; and to put it in my power to do all the good that he knew it was in my heart to do—And that I should prescribe to him in every thing as to place of residence, excursions, even to the going abroad to France, to Italy, and wherever I pleased.

To all which I answered as before; and when he insisted upon my reasons for refusing him, I frankly told him, though I owned it was with some reluctance, that I had not the opinion of his morals that I must have of those of the man to whom I gave my hand in marriage.

Of my *morals*, madam! (starting; and his colour went and came) My *morals*, madam!—I thought he looked with malice: but I was not intimidated: and yet my cousins looked at me with some little surprise for my plain dealing, though not as blaming me.

Be not displeased, Sir, with my freedom. You call upon me to make objections. I mean not to

upbraid you; that is not *my* business; but thus called upon, I must repeat—I stopt.

Proceed, madam, angrily.

Indeed, Sir Hargrave, you must pardon me on *this* occasion, if I repeat that I have not that opinion of your morals—

Very well, madam—

That I must have of those of the man on whose worthiness I must build my hopes of *present* happiness, and to whose guidance entrust my *future*. This, Sir, is a very material consideration with me, though I am not fond of talking upon it, except on *proper* occasions, and to *proper* persons: but, Sir, let me add, that I am determined to live longer single. I think it too early to engage in a life of care: and if I do not meet with a man to whom I can give my whole heart, I never will marry at all [O how maliciously looked the man!]—You are angry, Sir Hargrave, added I; but you have no right to be so. You address me as one who is her own mistress. And though I would not be thought rude, I value myself on my openness of heart.

He arose from his seat. He walked about the room muttering, "You have no opinion of my morals"—By heaven, madam!—But I will bear it all—Yet, "No opinion of my morals!"—I cannot bear that—

He then clenched his fist, and held it up to his head; and snatching up his hat, bowing to the ground to us all, his face crimsoned over (as the time before) he withdrew.

Mr. Reeves attended him to the door—"Not like my morals!" said he—I have *enemies*, Mr. Reeves—"Not like my morals!"—Miss Byron treats politely every-body but me, Sir. Her scorn may be repaid—Would to God I could say with scorn, Mr. Reeves.—Adieu. Excuse my warmth.—Adieu.

And into his chariot he stept, pulling up the glasses with violence; and, as Mr. Reeves told us, rearing up his head to the top of it, as he sat swelling. And away it drove.

His menacing airs, and abrupt departure, terrified me. I did not recover myself in an hour.

A fine husband for your Harriet would this half madman make!—O Mr. Fowler, Sir Rowland, Mr. Orme, what good men are you to Sir Hargrave! Should I have known half so much as I do of his ill qualities, had I not refused him? Drawn in by his professions of love, and by 8000l. a year, I might have married him; and, when too late, found myself miserable, yoked with a tyrant and madman, for the remainder of a life begun with happy prospects, and glorying in every one's love!

LETTER XX.

MISS BYRON. IN CONTINUATION.

Monday, February 13.

I HAVE received my uncle's long letter. And I thank him for the pains he has taken with me. He is very good. But my grandmamma and my aunt are equally so, and, in the main, much kinder, in acquitting me of some charges which he is pleased to make upon his poor Harriet. But, either for caution or reproof, I hope to be the better for his letter.

James is set out for Northamptonshire: pray receive him kindly. He is honest: and Sally has given me a hint, as if a sweetheart is in his head: if so, his impatience to leave London may be ac-

counted for. My grandmamma has observed, that young people of small or no fortunes should not be discouraged from marrying: Who that could be masters or mistresses would be servants? The honest poor, as she has often said, are a very valuable part of the creation.

Mr. Reeves has seen several footmen, but none that he gave me the trouble of speaking to till just now; when a well-looking young man, about twenty-six years of age, offered himself, and whom I believe I shall like. Mrs. Reeves seems mightily taken with him. He is well-behaved, has a very sensible look, and seems to merit a better service.

Mr. Reeves has written for a character of him to the last master he lived with; Mr. Bagenhall, a young gentleman in the neighbourhood of Reading: of whom he speaks well in the main; but modestly objected to his hours, and free way of life. The young man came to town but yesterday, and is with a widow sister, who keeps an inn in Smithfield. I have a *mind* to like him, and this makes me more particular about him.

His name is William Wilson: he asks pretty high wages: but wages to a good servant are not to be stood upon. What signify forty or fifty shillings a year? An honest servant should be enabled to lay up something for age and infirmity. Hire him at once, Mrs. Reeves says. She will be answerable for his honesty from his looks, and from his answers to the questions asked him.

Sir Hargrave has been here again. Mrs. Reeves, Miss Clements, and I, were in the back room together. We had drank tea; and I excused myself to his message, as engaged.

He talked a good deal to Mr. Reeves: sometimes high, sometimes humble. He had not intended, he said, to have renewed his visits. My disdain had

stung him to the heart: yet he could not keep away. He called himself names. He was determined I should be his; and swore to it. A man of his fortune to be refused, by a lady who had not (and whom he wished not to have) an answerable fortune, and no preferable liking to any other man [there Sir Hargrave was mistaken; for I like almost every man I know, better than him]; his person not contemptible [and then, my cousin says, he surveyed himself from head to foot in the glass]; was very, *very* unaccountable.

He asked if Mr. Greville came up with any hopes?

Mr. Reeves told him that I was offended at his coming, and he was sure he would not be the better for his journey.

He was glad of that, he said. There were two or three free things, proceeded he, said to me in conversation by Mr. Greville; which I knew not well what to make of: but they shall pass, if he has no more to boast of than I. I know Mr. Greville's blustering character; but I wish the carrying of Miss Byron were to depend upon the sword's point between us. I would not come into so paltry a compromise with him as Fenwick has done. But still the imputing want of *morals* to me, sticks with me. Surely I am a better man, in point of morals, than either Greville or Fenwick. What man on earth does not take liberties with the sex? You know, Mr. Reeves! women were made for us: and they like us not the worse for loving them. *Want of morals!*—And objected to me by a *lady!*—Very extraordinary, by my soul!—Is it not better to sow all one's wild oats before matrimony, than run riot afterwards?—What say you, Mr. Reeves?

Mr. Reeves was too patient with him. He is a mild man: yet wants not spirit, my cousin says; on

occasion. He gave Sir Hargrave the hearing; who went away, swearing, that I should be his, in spite of man or devil.

Monday night.

Mr. Greville came in the evening. He begged to be allowed but, ten words with me in the next room. I desired to be excused. You know, Sir, said I, that I never complied with a request of this nature, at Selby-house. He looked hard at my cousins; and first one, then the other, went out. He then was solicitous to know what were Sir Hargrave's expectations from me. He expressed himself uneasy upon his account. He hoped such a man as *that* would not be encouraged. Yet his ample fortune!—Woman! woman!—But he was neither a wiser nor a better man than himself; and he hoped Miss Byron would not give a preference to fortune *merely*, against a man who had been her admirer for so long a time; and who wanted neither will nor power to make her happy.

It was very irksome to me, I answered, to be obliged so often to repeat the same things to him. I would not be thought affronting to any-body, especially to a neighbour with whom my friends were upon good terms: but I did not think myself answerable to him, or to any one out of my own family, for my visitors; or for whom my cousin Reeves's thought fit to receive as theirs.

Would I give him an assurance, that Sir Hargrave should have no encouragement?

No, Sir, I will not. Would not that be to give you indirectly a kind of controul over me? Would not that be to encourage a hope, that I never *will* encourage?

I love not my own soul, madam, as I love you: I must, and will, persevere. If I thought Sir Har-

grave had the least hope, by the great God of heaven, I would pronounce his days numbered.

I am but too well acquainted with your rashness, Mr. Greville. What formerly passed between you and another gentleman, gave me pain enough. In such an enterprise your own days might be numbered as well as another's. But I enter not into this subject—*Henceforth* be so good as not to impute incivility to me, if I deny myself to your visits.

I would have withdrawn—

Dear Miss Byron (stepping between me and the door) leave me not in anger. If matters *must* stand as they were, I hope you *can*, I hope you *will*, assure me, that this Sir Fopling—

What right have you, Sir, to any assurance of this nature from me?

None, madam—but from your goodness---Dear Miss Byron, *condescend* to say, that this Sir Hargrave shall not make any impression on your heart. For *his sake* say it, if not for *mine*. I know you care not what becomes of *me*; yet let not this milk-faced, and tyger-hearted fop, for that is his character, obtain favour from you. Let your choice, if it must fall on another man, and not on me, fall on one to whose superior merit, and to whose good fortune, I can subscribe. For your own fame's sake, let a man of unquestionable honour be the happy man; and vouchsafe as to a neighbour, and as to a well-wishing friend only (I ask it not in the light of a lover) to tell me that Sir Hargrave Pollexfen shall not be the man.

What, Mr. Greville, let me ask you, is your business in town?

My *chief* business, madam, you may guess at. I had a hint of this man's intentions given me; and that he has the vanity to think he shall succeed.

But if I can be assured that you will not be prevailed upon in favour of a man, whose fortune is so ample—

You will then return to Northamptonshire?

Why, madam, I can't but say that now I am in town, and that I have bespoke a new equipage, and-so-forth—

Nay, Sir, it is nothing to me, what you will or will not do: only be pleased to remember, that as in Northamptonshire your visits were to my uncle Selby, not to me, they will be here in London, to my cousin Reeves's only.

Too well do I know that you can be cruel if you will: but is it your *pleasure* that I return to the country?

My *pleasure*, Sir!—Mr. Greville is surely to do as he pleases. I only wish to be allowed the same liberty.

You are so very delicate, Miss Byron! So very much afraid of giving the least advantage—

And men are so ready to take advantage—But yet, Mr. Greville, not so delicate as just. I do assure you, that if I were not determined—

Determined!—Yes, yes! you can be *steady*, as Mr. Selby calls it! I never knew so determined a woman in my life. I own, it was a little inconvenient for me to come to town just now: and say, that you would *wish* me to leave London; and that neither *this Sir Hargrave*, nor *that other man*, your *new father's* nephew (What do you call him? Foregad, madam, I am afraid of these new relations) shall make any impression on your heart; and that you will not withdraw when I come here; and I will set out next week; and write this very night to let Fenwick know how matters stand, and that I am coming down but little the better for my journey: and this may save you seeing your other tormentor, as your cousin Lucy says you once call-

ed that poor devil, and the still poorer devil before you.

You are so rash a man, Mr. Greville (and *other* men may be as rash as you), that I cannot say but it would save me some pain—

O take care, take care, Miss Byron, that you express yourself so cautiously, as to give no advantage to a poor dog, who would be glad to take a journey to the farthest part of the globe to oblige you. But what say you about this Sir Hargrave, and about your *new brother?*—Let me tell you, madam, I am so much afraid of those whining, insinuating, creeping dogs, attacking you on the side of your compassion, and be d—n'd to them (Orme for that) that I *must* have a declaration. And now, madam, can't you give it with your usual caution? Can't you give it, as I put it, as to a *neighbour*, as to a *well-wisher*, and-so-forth, not as to a lover?

Well then, Mr. Greville, as a *neighbour*, as a *well-wisher;* and since you own it was inconvenient to your affairs to come up—I advise you to go down again.

The devil! how you have hit it! Your delicacy ought to thank *me* for the loop-hole. The condition, madam; the condition, if I take your *neighbourly* advice?

Why, Mr. Greville, I do most sincerely declare to you, as to a neighbour and well-wisher, that I never, *yet,* have seen the man to whom I can think of giving my hand.

Yes, you have! By Heaven you have (snatching my hand): you shall give it to *me!*—And the strange wretch pressed it so hard to his mouth, that he made prints upon it with his teeth.

Oh! cried I, withdrawing my hand, surprised, and my face, as I could feel, all in a glow.

And *Oh!* said he, mimicking (and snatching my other hand, as I would have run from him) and patting it, speaking through his closed teeth, You may be glad you have a hand left. By my soul, I could eat you.

This was your disconsolate, fallen-spirited, Greville, Lucy!

I rushed into the company in the next room. He followed me with an air altogether unconcerned, and begged to look at my hand; whispering to Mrs. Reeves; By Jupiter, I had like to have eaten up your lovely cousin. I was beginning with her hand.

I was more offended with this instance of his assurance and unconcern, than with the freedom itself; because that had the appearance of his usual gaiety with it. I thought it best, however, not to be too serious upon it. But next time he gets me by himself, he shall eat up both my hands.

At taking leave, he hoped his mad flight had not discomposed me. See, Miss Byron, said he, what you get by making an honest fellow desperate!—But you insist upon my leaving the town? As a *neighbour*, as a *well-wisher*, you *advise* it, madam? Come, come, don't be afraid of speaking after me, when I endeavour to hit your cue.

I do *advise* you—

Conditions remember! You know what you have declared—Angel of a woman! said he again through his shut teeth.

I left him; and went up stairs; glad I had got rid of him.

He has since seen Mr. Reeves, and told him, he will make me one visit more before he leaves London: and pray tell her, said he, that I have actually written to my *brother tormentor* Fenwick, that I am returning to Northamptonshire.

I told you, that Miss Clements was with me when

Sir Hargrave came last. I like her every time I see her, better than before. She has a fine understanding; and if languages, according to my grandfather's observation, need not be deemed an *indispensable* part of learning, she may be looked upon as learned.

She has engaged me to breakfast with her tomorrow morning; when she is to shew me her books, needleworks, and other curiosities. Shall I not fancy myself in my Lucy's closet? How continually, amid all this fluttering scene, do I think of my dear friends in Northamptonshire! Express for me love, duty, gratitude, every sentiment that fills the heart of your

HARRIET BYRON.

LETTER XXI.

MISS BYRON. IN CONTINUATION.

Tuesday morning, February 14.

I HAVE passed an agreeable two hours with Miss Clements, and am just returned. She is extremely ingenious, and perfectly unaffected. I am told, that she writes finely; and is a Madame de Sevigne to her correspondents. I hope to be one of them. But she has not, I find, suffered her pen to run away with her needle; nor her reading to interfere with that housewifery which the best judges hold so indispensable in the character of a good woman.

I revere her for this, as her example may be produced as one, in answer to such as object (I am afraid sometimes too justly, but I hope too generally) against learning in women. Methinks, however, I would not have learning the *principal* dis-

tinction of the woman I love. And yet, where talents are *given*, should we wish them to be either uncultivated or unacknowledged? Surely, Lucy, we may pronounce, that where no duty is neglected for the acquirement; where modesty, delicacy, and a teachable spirit, are preserved, as characteristics of the sex, it need not be thought a disgrace to be supposed to know something.

Miss Clements is happy as well as your Harriet, in an aunt, that loves her. She has a mother living, who is too great a self-lover, to regard any-body else as she ought. She lives as far off as York, and was so unnatural a parent to this good child, that her aunt was not easy till she got her from her. Mrs. Wimburn looks upon her as her daughter, and intends to leave her all she is worth.

The old lady was not very well; but she obliged us with her agreeable company for half an hour.

Miss Clements and I agreed to fall in occasionally upon each other without ceremony.

I should have told you, that the last master of the young man, William Wilson, having given him in writing a very good character, I have entertained him; and his first service was attending on me to Miss Clements.

Lady Betty called here in my absence. She is, it seems, very full of the dresses, and mine in particular: but I must know nothing about it, as yet. We are to go to her house to dress, and to proceed from thence in chairs. She is to take care of every thing. You shall know, my Lucy, what figure I am to make, when I know it myself.

The baronet also called at my cousins while I was out. He saw only Mr. Reeves. He staid about a quarter of an hour. He was very moody and sullen, it seems. Quite another man, Mr. Reeves said, than he had ever seen him before. Not

one laugh; not one smile. All that fell from his lips was Yes or No; or by way of invective against the sex. It was "The devil of a sex." It was a cursed thing, he said, that a man could neither be happy with them, nor without them. *Devil's baits* was another of his compliments to us. He hardly mentioned my name.

Mr. Reeves at last began to railly him upon his moodiness; and plainly saw, that to avoid shewing more of his petulance (when he had not a right to shew any) to a man of Mr. Reeves's consideration, and in his own house, he went away the sooner. His footmen and coachman, he believed, had an ill time of it; for, without reason, he cursed them, swore at them, and threatened them.

What does the man haunt us for?—Why brings he such odious humours to Mr. Reeves's?

But no more of such a man, nor of any-thing else, till my next. Only,

Adieu, my

LUCY.

LETTER XXII.

MISS BYRON. IN CONTINUATION.

Wednesday morning, February 15.

MR. Greville took leave of us yesterday evening, in order to set out this morning, on his return home. He would fain have engaged me for half an hour, alone; but I would not oblige him.

He left London, he said, with some regret, because of the *fluttering* Sir Hargrave, and the *creeping* Mr. Fowler: but depended upon my declaration that I had not in *either of them* seen the man I could encourage. *Either* of them were the words he

chose to use; for, in compliment to himself, he would not repeat my very words, that I had not yet seen *any man* to whom I could give my hand. Shall I give you a few particulars of what passed between me and this very whimsical man?—I will.

He had been enquiring, he said, into the character and pretensions of my *brother* Fowler; and intended, if he could bring Orme and him together, to make a match between them, who should outwhine the other.

Heroes, I told him, ought not to make a jest of those, who, on comparison, gave them all their advantages.

He bowed, and called himself my servant—and with an affected laugh, Yet, madam, yet, madam, I am not afraid of these *piping* men: though you have compassion for such *watery headed* fellows, yet you have *only* compassion.

Respectful love, Mr. Greville, is not always the indication either of a weak head, or a faint heart; any more than the contrary is of a true spirit.

Perhaps so, madam. But yet I am not afraid of these two men.

You have no *reason* to be afraid of any body, on my account, Mr. Greville.

I hope not.

You will find, Sir, at last, that you had better take my meaning. It is obvious enough.

But I have no mind to hang, drown, or pistol myself.

Mr. Greville still!—Yet it would be well if there were not many Mr. Grevilles.

I take your meaning, madam. You have explained it heretofore. It is, that I am a libertine; that we have all one dialect; and that I can say nothing new, or that is worthy of your attention—

There, madam! May I not be always sure of your meaning, when I construe it against myself?

I wish, Sir, that my *neighbour* would give me leave to behave to him as to my *neighbour*—

And could you, madam, supposing *love* out of the question (which it cannot be), could you, in *that* case, regard me as your neighbour?

Why not, Sir?

Because I believe you hate me; and I only want you to tell me that you do.

I hope, Sir, I shall never have reason given me to hate any man.

But if you hate any one man more than another, is it not me? [I was silent] Strange, Mrs. Reeves, turning to her, that Miss Byron is not susceptible either of love or hatred!

She is too good to *hate* any-body; and as for *love*, her time seems not to be yet come.

When it is come, it will come with a vengeance, I hope.

Uncharitable man! said I, smiling.

Don't smile: I can't *bear* to see you smile: Why don't you be angry at me?—Angel of a creature! with his teeth again closed, don't smile: I cannot bear your bewitching smiles!

The man is out of his right mind, Mrs. Reeves. I don't choose to stay in his company.

I would have withdrawn. He besought me to stay; and stood between me and the door. I was angry.

He whimsically stamped—Obliging creature!—I besought you to forbear smiling—You frown—Do, God for ever bless you, my dear Miss Byron, let me be favoured with another frown.

Strange man! and bold as strange!—I would have passed to the door, but he set his back against it.

These are the airs, you know, Lucy, for which I used to shun him.

Pish! said I, vexed to be hindered from withdrawing.

Another, another such a frown, said the confident man, and I am happy!—The last has left no trace upon your features: it vanished before I could well behold it. Another frown, I beseech you; another pish—

I was really angry.—Bear witness [looking around him] Bear witness! Once did Miss Byron endeavour to frown: and, to oblige whom?—Her Greville!

Mr. Greville, you had better—I stopt. I was vexed. I knew not what I was going to say.

How *better*, madam! Am I not desperate?—But *had* I better? Say, repeat that again—*Had* I better—Better what?

The man's mad. O my cousins, let me never again be called to this man.

Mad!—And so I am. Mad for *you*. I care not who knows it. Why don't you hate me? He snatched at my hand; but I started back. You own that you never yet loved the man who loved you. Such is your gratitude!—Say, you hate me.

I was silent, and turned from him peevishly.

Why *then* (as if I had said I did not *hate* him) say you love me; and I will look down with contempt upon the greatest prince on earth.

We should have had more of this—But the rap of consequence gave notice of the visit of a person of consideration. It was Sir Hargrave.

The devil pick his bones, said the shocking Greville. I shall not be civil to him.

He is not *your* guest, Mr. Greville, said I—afraid that something affronting might pass between two

spirits so unmanageable; the one in an humour so whimsical, the other so very likely to be moody.

True, true; replied he. I will be all silence and observation.—But I hope you will not *now* be for retiring.

It would be too particular, thought I, if I am: yet I should have been glad to do so.

The baronet paid his respects to every one in a very set and formal manner; nor distinguished me.

Silly, as vain! thought I: Handsome fop! to imagine thy displeasure of consequence to me!

Mr. Greville, said Sir Hargrave, the town I understand is going to lose you.

The town, Sir Hargrave, cannot be said to have found me.

How can a man of your gallantry and fortune find himself employment in the country, in the winter, I wonder?

Very easily, when he has used himself to it, Sir Hargrave, and has seen abroad in greater perfection than you can have them here, the kind of diversions you all run after, with so keen an appetite.

In *greater* perfection! I question that, Mr. Greville: and I have been abroad; though too early, I own, to make critical observations.

You may question it, Sir Hargrave; but I don't.

Have we not from Italy the most famous singers, Mr. Greville, and from thence, and from France, for our money, the most famous dancers in the world?

No, Sir. They set too great a value in Italy, let me tell you, upon their finest voices, and upon their finest composers too, to let them turn strollers.

Strollers do you call them? Ha, ha, ha, hah!—*Princely* strollers, as we reward them! And as to composers, have we not Handel?

There you say something, Sir Hargrave. But you have but one Handel in England: they have several in Italy.

Is it possible? said every one.

Let me die, said the baronet, with a forced laugh, if I am not ready to think that Mr. Greville has run into the fault of people of less genius than himself. He has got such a taste for foreign performers, that he cannot think tolerably of those of his own country; be they ever so excellent.

Handel, Sir Hargrave, is not an Englishman: but I must say, that of every person present, I least expected from Sir Hargrave Pollexfen this observation.

[He then returned the baronet's laugh, and not without an air of mingled anger and contempt.]

Nor I this taste for foreign performances and compositions from Mr. Greville; for so long time as thou hast been a downright country gentleman.

[Indeed, thought I, you seem both to have changed characters. But I know how it comes about: let one advance what he will, in the present humour of both, the other will contradict it. Mr. Greville knows nothing of music: what he said was from hearsay: and Sir Hargrave is no better grounded in it.]

A *downright country gentleman!* repeated Mr. Greville, measuring Sir Hargrave with his eye, and putting up his lip.

Why, pr'ythee now, Greville, thou what-shall-I-call-thee? thou art not offended, I hope, that we are not all of one mind; Ha, ha, ha, hah!

I am offended at nothing you *say*, Sir Hargrave.

Nor I at any thing you *look*, my dear, Ha, ha, ha, hah.

Yet his looks shewed as much contempt for Mr. Groville as Mr. Greville's did for him. How easily

might these combustible spirits have blown each other up! Mr. Reeves was once a little apprehensive of consequences from the airs of both.

Mr. Greville turned from Sir Hargrave to me: Well, Miss Byron, said he; but as to what we were talking about—

This he seemed to say, on purpose, as I thought by his air, to alarm the baronet.

I beg pardon, said Sir Hargrave; turning with a stiff air to me: I beg pardon, Miss Byron, if I have intruded—

We were talking of indifferent things, Sir Hargrave, answered I—Mere matters of pleasantry.

I was more in *earnest* than in *jest*, Miss Byron, replied Mr. Greville.

We all, I believe, thought you very whimsical, Mr. Greville, returned I.

What was sport to you, madam, is death to me.

Poor Greville! Ha, ha, ha, hah (affectedly laughed the baronet): but I know you are a joker. You are a man of wit [this a little softened Mr. Greville, who had begun to look grave upon Sir Hargrave] Come, pr'ythee, man, give thyself up to me for this night; and I will carry thee to a private concert; where none but choice spirits are admitted; and let us see if music will not divert these gloomy airs, that sit so ill upon the face of one of the liveliest men in the kingdom.

Music! Ay, if Miss Byron will give us a song, and accompany it with the harpsichord, I will despise all other harmony.

Every one joined in his request: and I was not backward to oblige them, as I thought the conversation bore a little too rough a cast, and was not likely to take a smoother turn.

Mr. Greville, who always enjoys any jest that tends to reflect on our sex, begged me to sing that

whimsical song set by Galliard, which once my uncle made me sing at Selby-house, in Mr. Greville's hearing. You were not there, Lucy, that day, and perhaps may not have the book, as Galliard is not a favourite with you.

> *Chloe*, by all the pow'rs above,
> To *Damon* vow'd eternal love:
> A rose adorn'd her sweeter breast;
> She on a leaf the vow imprest:
> But Zephyr, by her side at play,
> *Love*, *vow*, and *leaf*, blew quite away.

The gentlemen were very lively on the occasion; and encored it: but I told them, That as they must be better pleased with the jest on our sex contained in it, than they could be with the music, I would not, for the sake of their own politeness, oblige them.

You will favour us, however, with your *Discreet Lover*, Miss Byron, said Mr. Greville. That is a song written entirely upon your own principles.

Well then I will give you it, said I, set by the same hand.

THE DISCREET LOVER.

> Ye fair, that would be blest in love,
> Take your pride a little lower;
> Let the swain whom you approve,
> Rather *like* you, than *adore*.
>
> Love, that rises into passion,
> Soon will end in hate or strife:
> But from tender inclination,
> Flow the *lasting* joys of life.

These two light pieces put the gentlemen into good humour; and a deal of silly stuff was said to me, by way of compliment, on the occasion, by Sir Hargrave and Mr. Greville; not one word of which I believed.

The baronet went away first, to go to his concert. He was very cold in his behaviour to me at taking leave, as he had been all the time.

Mr. Greville soon after left us, intending to set out this morning.

He snatched my hand at going. I was afraid of a second savage freedom, and would have withdrawn it.—Only one sigh over it; but one sigh. Oh!—said he, an Oh, half a yard long—and pressed it with his lips—But remember, madam, you are watched: I have half a dozen spies upon you; and the moment you find the man you can favour, up comes your Greville, cuts a throat, and flies his country.

He stopt at the parlour-door—One letter, Miss Byron—Receive but one letter, from me.

No, Mr. Greville: but I wish you well.

Wishes! that, like the bishops blessing, cost you nothing. I was going to say *No*, for you: but you were too quick. It had been some pleasure to have denied *myself*, and prevented the mortification of a denial from *you*.

He went away; every one wishing him a good journey, and speaking favourably of the odd creature. Mrs. Reeves, in particular, thought fit to say, that he was the most entertaining of all my lovers: but if so, what is it they call entertaining? and what are those *others*, whom they call my lovers?

The man, said I, is an immoral man: and had he not got above blushes, and above being hurt by love, he could not have been so gay, and so *entertaining*, as you call it.

Miss Byron says true, said Mr. Reeves. I never knew a man who could make a jesting-matter of the passion in the presence of the object, so very deeply in love, as to be hurt by a disappointment. There

sits Mrs. Reeves. Did I ever make a jest of my love to you, madam?

No indeed, Sir: had I not thought you most *deplorably* in earnest, you had not had any of my pity.

That's a declaration in point. Either Mr. Orme, or Mr. Fowler, must be the happy man, Miss Byron.

Indeed, neither.

But why? They have both good estates. They both adore you. Sir Hargrave I see you cannot have. Mr. Greville dies not for you, though he would be glad to live with you. Mr. Fenwick is a still less eligible man, I think. Where can you be better than with one of the two I have named?

You speak seriously, cousin: I will not answer lightly: but neither of those gentlemen can be the man: yet I esteem them both because they are good men.

Well, but don't you pity them?

I don't know what to say to that: you hold, that pity is but one remove from love: and to say I *pity* a man who professes to love me, because I cannot consent to be his, carries with it, I think, an air of arrogance, and looks as if I believed he must be unhappy without me, when possibly there may be hundreds of women, with any one of whom he might be more truly happy.

Well, this is in character from you, Miss Byron: but may I ask you now, Which of the two gentlemen, Mr. Orme, or Mr. Fowler, were you obliged to have *one* of them, would you choose?

Mr. Orme, I frankly answer. Have I not told Mr. Fowler so?

Well, then, what are your objections, may I ask, to Mr. Orme? He is not a disagreeable man in his person. You own that you think him a good man.

His sister loves you; and you love her. What is your objection to Mr. Orme?

I don't know what to say. I hope I should perform my duty to the man to whom I shall give my vows, be he who he will: but I am not in haste to marry. If a single woman *knows* her own happiness, she will find that the time from eighteen to twenty-four is the happiest part of her life. If she stay till she *is* twenty-four, she has time to look about her, and if she has more lovers than one, is enabled to choose without having reason, on looking back, to reproach herself for hastiness. Her fluttering, her romantic age (we all know something of it, I doubt) is over by twenty-four, or it will hold too long; and she is then fit to take her resolutions, and to settle. I have more than once hinted, that I should be afraid to engage with one who thinks *too highly* of me beforehand. Nothing violent can be lasting, and I could not bear when I had given a man my heart with my hand (and they never shall be separated) that he should behave to me with less affection than he shewed to me before I was his. As I wish not *now* to be made an idol of, I may the more reasonably expect the constancy due to friendship, and not to be affronted with his indifference after I have given him my whole self. In other words, I could not bear to have my love slighted; or to be despised for it, instead of being encouraged to shew it. And how shall extravagant passion warrant hopes of this nature—if the man be not a man of gratitude, of principle, and a man whose love is founded in reason, and whose object is *mind*, rather than *person?*

But Mr. Orme, replied Mr. Reeves, is all this. *Such*, I believe, is his love.

Be it so. But if I cannot love him so well as to

wish to be his (a man, I have heard my uncle, as well as Sir Hargrave, say, is *his own;* a woman is a *man's*); if I cannot take delight in the thought of bearing my part of the yoke with him; in the belief, that, in case of a contrariety of sentiments, I cannot give up *my* judgment, in points indifferent, from the good opinion, I have of *his;* what but a fondness for the state, and an irksomeness in my present situation, could bias me in favour of *any* man? Indeed, my cousin, I must love the man to whom I would give my hand, well enough to be able, on cool deliberation, to *wish* to be his wife; and for *his* sake (with my whole heart) choose to quit the single state, in which I am very happy.

And you are sure that your indifference to Mr. Orme is not, either directly or indirectly, owing to his obsequious love of you; and to the *milkiness of his nature,* as Shakespeare calls it?

Very sure! All the leaning towards him that I have in preference, as I think, to every other man who has beheld me with partiality, is, on the contrary, owing to the grateful sense I have of his respect to me, and to the gentleness of his nature. Does not my behaviour to Mr. Greville, to Mr. Fenwick, to Sir Hargrave, compared with my treatment of Mr. Orme, and Mr. Fowler, confirm what I say?

Then you are, as indeed I have always thought you, a nonsuch of a woman.

Not so; your own lady, whom you first brought to pity you, as I have heard you say, is an instance that I am not.

Well, that's true: but is she not, at the same time, an example, that pity *melts the soul to love?*

I have no doubt, said Mrs. Reeves, but Miss Byron may be brought to love the man she can pity.

But, madam, said I, did you not let pity grow into love, before you married Mr. Reeves?

I believe I did; smiling.

Well then I promise you, Mr. Reeves, when that comes to be the case with me, I will not give pain to a man I can like to marry.

Very well, replied Mr. Reeves: and I dare say, that at last Mr. Orme will be the man. And yet how you will get off with Sir Hargrave, I cannot tell. For Lady Betty Williams, this very day, told me, that he declared to her, he was resolved you should be his. And she has promised him all her interest with you, and with us; and is astonished that you can refuse a man of his fortune and address, and who has many, very many, admirers, among people of the first rank.

The baronet is at the door. I suppose he will expect to see me.

Wednesday afternoon.

Sir Hargrave is just gone. He desired to talk with me alone. I thought I might very well decline obliging him, as he had never scrupled to say to me all he had a mind to say before my cousins; and as he had thought himself of consequence enough to behave moodily; and even made *this* request rather with an air of expectation, than of respect; and I accordingly desired to be excused. He stalked about. My cousins, first one, then the other, withdrew. His behaviour had not been so agreeable, as to deserve this compliance: I was vexed they did.

He offered, as soon as they were gone, to take my hand.

I withdrew it.

Madam (said he, very impertinently angry) you

would not do thus to Mr. Greville: you would not do thus to *any* man but me.

Indeed, Sir, I would, were I left alone with him.

You see, madam, that I cannot forbear visiting you. My heart and soul are devoted to you. I own I have pride. Forgive me; it is piqued. I did not believe I should have been rejected by any lady, who had no dislike to a change of condition; and was disengaged. You declare that you are so; and I am willing, I am desirous, to believe you.—And yet that Greville—

There he stopt, as expecting me to speak.

To what purpose, Sir Hargrave, do you expect an answer to what you hint about Mr. Greville? It is not my way to behave with incivility to any man who professes a regard for me—

Except to me, madam—

Self-partiality, Sir, and nothing else, could cause you to make this exception.

Well, madam, but as to Mr. Greville—

Pray, Sir Hargrave—

And pray, Miss Byron—

I have never yet seen the man who is to be my husband.

By G— said the wretch, fiercely (almost in the language of Mr. Greville on the like occasion) but you have—And if you are not engaged in your affections, the *man* is before you.

If this, Sir Hargrave, is all you wanted to say to me, and would not be denied saying it, it might have been said before my cousins. I was for leaving him.

You shall not go. I beg, madam—Putting himself between me and the door.

What further would Sir Hargrave say [standing still, and angry] What further would Sir Hargrave say?

Have you, madam, a dislike to matrimony?

What right have you, Sir, to ask me this question?

Do you ever intend to enter into the state?

Perhaps I may, if I meet with a man to whom I can give my whole heart.

And cannot that man be I?—Let me implore you, madam.' I will kneel to you [and down he dropt on his knees.] I cannot live without you. For God's sake, madam! Your pity, your mercy, your gratitude, your love! I could not do this before any-body, unless assured of favour. I implore your favour.

[Foolish man! It was plain, that this kneeling supplication was premeditated.]

O Sir, what undue humility!—Could I have received your address, none of this had been necessary.

Your pity, madam, once more, your gratitude, your mercy, your love.

Pray, Sir, rise.

He swore by his God, that he would not, till I had given him hope—

No hope can I give you, Sir. It would be cheating, it would be deluding you, it would not be honest, to give you hope.

You objected to my morals, madam: have you any other objection?

Need there any other?

But I can clear myself.

To God, and to your conscience, then do it, Sir. I want you not to clear yourself to me.

But, madam, the clearing myself to you, would be clearing myself to God, and my conscience.

What language is this, Sir? But you can be nothing to me: indeed you can be nothing to me—Rise, Sir; rise or I leave you.

I made an effort to go. He caught my hand;

and arose—Then kissed it, and held it between both his.

For God's sake, madam—

Pray, Sir Hargrave—

Your objections? I insist upon knowing your objections. My *person*, madam—Forgive me, I am not used to boast—My *person*, madam—

Pray, Sir Hargrave.

—Is not contemptible. My *fortune*—

God bless you, Sir, with your fortune.

—Is not inconsiderable. My *morals*—

Pray, Sir Hargrave! Why this enumeration to me?

—Are as unexceptionable as those of most young men of fashion in the present age.

[I am sorry if this be true, thought I to myself.]

You have reason, I hope, Sir, to be glad of that.

My *descent*—

Is honourable, Sir, no doubt.

My *temper* is not bad. I am thought to be a man of vivacity, and of cheerfulness.—I have *courage*, madam—And this should have been seen, had I found reason to dread a competitor in your favour.

I thought you were enumerating your *good* qualities, Sir Hargrave.

Courage, madam, magnanimity in a man, madam—

Are great qualities, Sir. Courage in a right cause, I mean. Magnanimity, you know, Sir, is greatness of mind.

And so it is; and I hope—

And I, Sir Hargrave, hope you have great reason to be satisfied with *your*-self: but it would be very grievous to me, if I had not the liberty so to act, so to govern myself, in essential points, as should leave me as well satisfied with *my*-self.

This, I hope, *may* be the case, madam, if you

encourage my passion: and let me assure you, that no man breathing ever loved a woman as I love you. My *person*, my *fortune*, my *morals*, my *descent*, my *temper* (a man in such a case as this may be allowed to do himself justice) all unexceptionable; let me die if I can account for your—your—your refusal of me in so peremptory, in so unceremonious a manner, slap-dash, as I may say; and not one objection to make, or which you will condescend to make!

You say, Sir, that you love me above all women: would you, *can* you, be so little nice, as to wish to marry a woman who does not prefer you to all men? —If you *are*, let me tell you, Sir, that you have assigned a reason against yourself, which I think I ought to look upon as conclusive.

I make no doubt, madam, that my behaviour to you after marriage, will induce you, in gratitude as well as justice, to prefer me to all men.

Your behaviour *after* marriage, Sir!—Never will I trust to that, where—

Where what, madam?

No need of entering into particulars, Sir. You see that we cannot be of the same mind. You, Sir Hargrave, have no doubt of your *merit*—

I know, madam, that I should make it the business as well as pleasure of my life, to deserve you.

You value yourself upon your *fortune*, Sir—

Only as it gives me power to make you happy.

Riches never yet, of themselves, made any-body happy. I have already as great a fortune as I wish for. You think yourself *polite*.—

Polite, madam!—And I hope—

The whole of what I mean, Sir Hargrave, is this: you have a very high opinion of yourself: you may have reason for it; since you must know yourself, and your own heart, better than I can pretend to do: but would you, let me ask you, make choice of

a woman for a wife, who frankly owns, that she cannot think so highly, as you imagine she *ought* to think of you?—In justice to yourself, Sir—

By my soul, madam, haughtily, you are the only woman who could thus—

Well, Sir, perhaps I am. But will not this singularity convince you, that I can never make you happy, nor you me? You tell me, that you think highly of me; but if I cannot think so highly of you, pray, Sir, let me be intitled to the same freedom in my refusal that governs you in your choice.

He walked about the room; and gave himself airs that shewed greater inward than even outward emotion.

I had a mind to leave him; yet was not willing to withdraw abruptly, intending, and hoping, to put an end to all his expectations for the future. I therefore in a manner asked for leave to withdraw.

I presume, Sir, that nothing remains to be said but what may be said before my cousins. And, courtesying, was going.

He told me with a passionate air, that he was half-distracted; and complained of the use I made of the power I had over him. And as I had near opened the door, he threw himself on his knees to me against it, and undesignedly hurt my finger with the lock.

He was grieved. I made light of it, though in pain, that he might not have an opportunity to flourish upon it, and to shew a tenderness which I doubt is not very natural to him.

How little was I affected with *his* kneeling, to what I was with the same posture in Sir Rowland! Sir Hargrave supplicated me as before. I was forced in answer to repeat some of the same things that I had said before.

I would fain have parted civilly. He would not permit me to do so. Though he was on his knees, he

mingled passion, and even indirect menaces, with his supplications. I was forced to declare, that I never more would receive his visits.

This declaration he vowed would make him desperate, and he cared not what became of him.

I often begged him to rise; but to no purpose, till I declared that I would stay no longer with him: and then he arose, rapt out an oath or two; again called me proud and ungrateful; and followed me into the other room to my cousins. He could hardly be civil to them: he walked two or three turns about the room: at last, Forgive me, Mr. Reeves, forgive me, Mrs. Reeves, said he, bowing to them; more stiffly to me—And you *forbid* my future visits, madam, said he, with a face of malice.

I do, Sir; and that for both our sakes. You have greatly discomposed me.

Next time, madam, I have the honour of attending you, it will be, I hope—[he stopt a moment, but still looking fiercely] to a happier purpose. And away he went.

Mr. Reeves was offended with him, and discouraged me not in my resolution to avoid receiving his future visits. You will now therefore hear very little farther in my letters of this Sir Hargrave Pollexfen.

And yet I wish I do not see him very soon. But it will be in company enough if I do: at the masquerade, I mean, to-morrow night; for he never misses going to such entertainments.

Our dresses are ready. Mr. Reeves is to be a hermit; Mrs. Reeves a nun; Lady Betty a lady abbess: but I by no means like mine, because of its gaudiness: the very *thing* I was afraid of.

They call it the dress of an Arcadian princess:

but it falls not in with any of my notions of the pastoral dress of Arcadia.

A white Paris net sort of a cap, glittering with spangles, and incircled by a chaplet of artificial flowers, with a little white feather perking from the left ear, is to be my head-dress.

My masque is Venetian.

My hair is to be complimented with an appearance, because of its natural ringlets, as they call my curls, and to shade my neck.

Tucker and ruffles blond lace.

My shape is also said to be consulted in this dress. A kind of waistcoat of blue satin trimmed with silver point d'Espagne, the skirts edged with silver fringe, is made to sit close to my waist by double clasps, a small silver tassel at the end of each clasp; all set off with bugles and spangles, which make a mighty glitter.

But I am to be allowed a kind of scarf of white Persian silk; which, gathered at the top, is to be fastened to my shoulders, and to fly loose behind me.

Bracelets on my arms.

They would have given me a crook; but I would not submit to that. It would give me, I said, an air of confidence to aim to manage it with any tolerable freedom; and I was apprehensive, that I should not be thought to want *that* from the dress itself. A large Indian fan was not improper for the expected warmth of the place; and that contented me.

My petticoat is of blue satin, trimmed and fringed as my waistcoat. I am not to have a hoop that is perceivable. They wore not hoops in Arcadia.

What a sparkling figure shall I make! Had the ball been what they call a subscription ball, at which

people dress with more glare than at a common one, this dress would have been more tolerable.

But they all say, that I shall be kept in countenance by masques as extravagant, and even more ridiculous.

Be that as it may, I wish the night was over. I dare say, it will be the last diversion of this kind I ever shall be at; for I never had any notion of masquerades.

Expect particulars of all in my next. I reckon you will be impatient for them. But pray, my Lucy, be fanciful, as I sometimes am, and let me know how you think every-thing will be beforehand; and how many pretty-fellows you imagine, in this dress, will be slain by your

HARRIET BYRON.

LETTER XXIII.

MR. REEVES TO GEORGE SELBY, ESQ.

DEAR MR. SELBY, Friday, February 17.

No one, at present, but yourself, must see the contents of what I am going to write.

You must not be too much surprised.

But how shall I tell you the news; the dreadful news?—My wife has been ever since three this morning in violent hysterics upon it.

You must not—But how shall I say, *you* must not, be too much affected, when *we* are unable to support ourselves?

O my cousin Selby!—We know not what is become of our dearest Miss Byron!

I will be as particular as my grief and surprise

will allow. There is a necessity for it, as you will find.

Mr. Greville, as I apprehend—But to particulars first.

We were last night at the ball in the Hay-market.

The chairmen who carried the dear creature, and who, as well as *our* chairmen, were engaged for the night, were inveigled away to drink somewhere. They promised Wilson, my cousin's servant, to return in half an hour.

It was then but little more than twelve.

Wilson waited near two hours, and they not returning, he hired a chair to supply their place.

Between two and three, we all agreed to go home. The dear creature was fatigued with the notice every-body took of her. Every-body admired her. She wanted to go before; but Lady Betty prevailed on her to stay a little longer.

I waited on her to her chair, and saw her in it before I attended Lady Betty and my wife to theirs.

I saw that neither the chair, nor the chairmen, were those who brought her. I asked the meaning; and received the above particulars after she was in the chair.

She hurried into it because of her dress, and being warm, and no less than four gentlemen following her to the very chair.

It was then near three.

I ordered Wilson to bid the chairmen stop when they had got out of the crowd, till Lady Betty's chair and mine, and my wife's, joined them.

I saw her chair move, and Wilson with his lighted flambeaux before it; and the four masques who followed her to the chair return into the house.

When our servants could not find that her chair had stopt, we supposed that in the hurry, the fellow heard not my orders; and directed our chairmen to

proceed; not doubting but we should find her got home before us.

We had before agreed to be carried directly home: declining Lady Betty's invitation to resume our own dresses at her house, where we dressed for the ball.

We were very much surprised at finding her not arrived: but concluding, that, by mistake, she was carried to Lady Betty's, and was there expecting us, we sent thither immediately.

But, good God! what was our consternation, when the servants brought us word back, that Lady Betty had not either seen or heard of her!

Mr. Greville, as I apprehend—

But let me give you all the lights on which I ground my surmises.

Last night Lady Betty Williams had a hint given her, as she informed me at the masquerade, that Mr. Greville, who took leave of my cousin on Tuesday evening in order to set out for Northamptonshire the next morning, was neither gone, nor intended to go; being, on the contrary, resolved to continue in town perdue, in order to watch my cousin's visiters.

He had indeed told her, that she would have half a dozen spies upon her; and threw out some hints of jealousy of two of her visiters.

Sir Hargrave Pollexfen in a harlequin dress was at the ball: he soon discovered our lovely cousin, and notwithstanding his former ill-nature on being rejected by her, addressed her with the politeness of a man accustomed to public places.

He found me out at the side-board a little before we went off; and asked me, if I had not seen Mr. Greville there? I said, No.

He asked me, if I had not observed a masque distinguished by a broad-brimmed half-slouched hat,

with a high flat crown, a short black cloak, a dark lantern in his hand, holding it up to every one's masque; and who, he said, was saluted by every-body as Guido Vaux? That person he said was Mr. Greville.

I did indeed observe this person; but recollected not, that he had the air of Mr. Greville; but thought him a much more bulky man. But that, as he intended to have it supposed he had left the town, might be easily managed.

Mr. Greville, you know, is a man of enterprize.

He came to town, having professedly no other material business but to give obstruction to my cousin's visiters. He saw she had two new ones. He talked at first of staying in town, and partaking of its diversions, and even of bespeaking a new equipage.

But all of a sudden, though expecting Mr. Fenwick would come up, he pretended to leave the town, and to set out directly for Northamptonshire, without having obtained any concession from my cousin in his favour.

Laying all these circumstances together, I think it is hardly to be doubted, but Mr. Greville is at the bottom of this black affair.

You will therefore take such steps on these lights as your prudence will suggest to you. If Mr. Greville is not come down—If Mr. Fenwick—what would I say?

The less noise, however, the affair makes, till we can come at certainty, the better.

How I dread what that certainty may be!—Dear creature!

But I am sure you will think it advisable to keep this dreadful affair from her poor grandmother. And I hope your good lady—Yet *her* prudent advice may be necessary.

I have six people out at different parts of the town, who are to make enquiries among chairmen, coachmen, &c.

Her new servant cannot be a villain—What can one say?—What can one think?

We have sent to his sister, who keeps an inn in Smithfield. She has heard nothing of him.

I have sent after the chairmen who carried her to this cursed masquerade. Lady Betty's chairmen, who had provided the chairs, knew them, and their number. They were traced with a fare from White's to Berkeley-square.

Something may be discovered by means of those fellows, if they were tampered with. They are afraid, I suppose, to come to demand their but half-earned money. Woe be to them if they come out to be rascals!

I had half a suspicion of Sir Hargrave, as well from the character given us of him by a friend of mine, as because of his unpolite behaviour to the dear creature on her rejecting him: and sent to his house in Cavendish-square, to know if he were at home; and if he were, at what time he returned from the ball.

Answer was brought, that he was in bed, and they supposed would not be stirring till dinner-time, when he expected company: and that he returned not from the ball till between four and five this morning.

We sent to Mr. Greville's lodgings. He has actually discharged them; and the people think (as he told them so) that he is set out for the country. But he is master of contrivances enough to manage this. There can be no thought that he would give out otherwise to them, than he did to us. Happy! had we found him not gone.

Mr. Greville *must* be the man!

You will be so good, as to dispatch the bearer instantly with what information can be got about Mr. Greville.

Ever, ever yours!

ARCHIBALD REEVES.

LETTER XXIV.

MR. SELBY TO ARCHIBALD REEVES, ESQ.

[*In answer to the preceding.*]

Saturday, February 18.

O Mr. Reeves!—Dear sweet child!—Flower of the world!—

But how could I keep such dreadful tidings within my own breast?—

How could I conceal my consternation?—My wife saw it. She would know the cause of it.

I could not tell her the fatal news—Fatal news indeed! It will be immediate death to her poor grandmother—

We must keep it from her as long as we can!—But *keep* it from her!—And *is* the dearest creature spirited away?—O Mr. Reeves!—

I gave my wife your letter. She fainted away, before she had read it through.

Masquerades, I have generally heard said, were more silly than wicked: but they are now, I am convinced, the most profligate of all diversions.

Almost distracted, cousin!—You may well be so: we shall all be *quite* distracted—Dear, dear creature! What may she not have suffered by this time?

Why parted we with such a jewel out of our sight?

You *would* not be denied: you *would* have her to that cursed town.

Some damned villain, to be sure!—Greville it is not.

Greville was seen late last night, alighting at his own house from a post-chaise. He had nobody with him.

In half an hour, late as it was, he sent his compliments to us to let us know that he had left the dear child well, and (in his usual style) happier than she would make him. He knows that our lives are bound up in hers.

Find out where she is: and find her safe and well: or we will never forgive those who were the cause of her going to London.

Dear soul! She was over persuaded!—She was not fond of going!

The sweetest, obliging creature!—What is now become of her!—What by this time may she not have suffered!—

Search every-where—But you will, no doubt!—Suspect every-body—This Lady Betty Williams—Such a plot must have a woman in it. Was she not Sir Hargrave's friend?—This Sir Hargrave—Greville it could not be. Had we not the proof I mentioned, Greville, bad as he is, could not be such a villain.

The first moment you have any tidings, bad or good, spare no expence—

* * *

Greville was this moment here.

We could not see him. We did not let him know the matter.

He is gone away, in great surprise, on the servants telling him that we had received some bad news, which made us unfit to see any-body. The servants could not tell him what: yet they all guess by your livery, and by our grief, that something has befallen their beloved young lady. They are all in

tears—and they look at us, when they attend us, with *such* inquisitive, yet silent grief!—We are speechless before them; and tell them our wills by motions, and not by words.

Good God!—After so many happy years!—Happy in ourselves! to be at last in so short a time made the most miserable of wretches!

But this had not been, if—But no more—Good God of heaven, what will become of poor Mrs. Shirley!—Lucy, Nancy, will go distracted—But no more—Hasten your next—And forgive this distracted letter. I know not what I have written. But I am

Yours,
GEORGE SELBY.

LETTER XXV.

MR. REEVES TO GEORGE SELBY, ESQ.

[*In continuation of Letter* XXIII.]

LADY Betty's chairmen have found out the first chairmen.

The fellows were made almost dead drunk. They are sure something was put into their liquor. They have been hunting after the footmen, who enticed them, and drank them down. They describe their livery to be brown, trimmed and turned up with yellow; and are in the service of a merchant's relict, who lives either in Mark-lane, or Mincing-lane; they forgot which: but have not yet been able to find them out. Their lady, they said, was at the masquerade. They were very officious to scrape acquaintance with them. We know not any-body who gives this livery: so no lights can be obtained by this part of the information. A cursed deep-laid

villany!—The fellows are resolved, they say, to find out these footmen, if above ground; and the chairmen who were hired on their failure.

Every hour we have one messenger or other returning with something to say; but hitherto with nothing to the purpose. This has kept me within. O Mr. Selby, I know not what to direct! I know not what to do! I send them out again as fast as they return: yet rather shew my despair, than my hope.

Surely this villany must be Mr. Greville's. Though I have but just dispatched away my servant to you, I am impatient for his return.

I will write every hour, as any-thing offers, that I may have a letter ready to send you by another man, the moment we hear any thing. And yet I expect not to hear any-thing material, but from you.

We begin to suspect the servant (that Wilson) whom my cousin so lately hired. Were *he* clear of the matter, either he, or the chairmen he hired, must have been heard of. He would have returned. They could not all three be either murdered or secreted.

These cursed masquerades!—Never will I—

***

O Mr. Selby! Her servant is, must be a villain!—Sarah, my dear cousin's servant (my poor wife can think of nothing. She is extremely ill) Sarah took it into her head to have the specious rascal's trunk broke open. It felt light, and he had talked, but the night before, of his stock of clothes and linen, to the other servants. There was nothing of value found in it; not of *six*-pence value. The most specious villain, if a villain. Every-body liked him. The dear creature herself was pleased with him. He knew every thing and every-body—Cursed be he for his adroit-

ness and knowledge! We had made too many enquiries after a servant for her.

Eleven o'clock.

I am just returned from Smithfield. From the villain's sister. He comes out to be a villain—This Wilson I mean—A practised villain!

The woman shook her head at the enquiry which I made, half out of breath, after what was become of him. She was afraid, she said, that all was not right: but was sure her brother had not robbed.

He had been guilty, I said, of a villany that was a thousand times worse than robbery.

She was inquisitive about it; and I hinted to her what it was.

Her brother, she said, was a young man of parts and understanding, and would be glad, she was sure, of getting a livelihood by honest services. It was a sad thing that there should be such masters in the world, as would put servants upon bad practices.

I asked after the character of that Bagenhall, whose service her brother last lived in? and imprudently I threatened her brother.

Ah, Sir! was all the answer she made, shaking her head.

I repeated my question, Who was that Bagenhall?—

Excuse me, Sir, said she. I will give no other answer, till I hear whether my brother's life may be in danger or not. She abhorred, she said, all base practices as much as any-body could do; and she was sorry for the lady, and for me.

I then offered to be the making of her brother, were it possible to engage him before any violence was done to the lady. I asked, If she knew where to send to him?

Indeed she did not. She dared to say, she should

not hear of him for one while. Whenever he had been drawn in to assist in any out-of-the-way pranks [see, Mr. Selby, a practised villain!] he kept away from her till all was blown over. Those who would take such steps, she feared, would by this time have done the mischief.

How I raved!

I offered her money, a handsome sum, if she would tell me what she knew of that Bagenhall, or of any of her brother's employers: but she refused to say one word more, till she knew whether her brother's life were likely to be affected or not.

I left her, and hastened home, to enquire after what might have happened in my absence: but will soon see her again, in hopes she may be wrought upon to drop some hints, by which something may be discovered—But all this time, What may be the fate of the dear sufferer!—I cannot bear my own thoughts!

Lady Betty is inexpressibly grieved—

I have dispatched a man and horse (God knows to what purpose) to a friend I have at Reading, to get him to enquire after the character of this Bagenhall. There is such a man, and he is a man of pleasure, as Sir John Allestree informs me—Accursed villain, this Wilson! He could not bear with his master's constant bad hours, and profligate course of life, as he told our servants, and Mrs. Sarah!—Specious impostor!

One o'clock.

Lady Betty's chairmen have found out, and brought with them, one of the fellows whom that vile Wilson hired. The other was afraid to come. I have secured this fellow: yet he seems to be ingenuous: and I have promised, that if he prove innocent, he shall be rewarded instead of being punished;

and the two chairmen, on this promise, are gone to try to prevail upon his partner to come, were it but to release the other, as both insisted upon their innocence.

And now will you be imptaient to know what account this fellow gives.

O Mr. Selby! The dear, dear creature—But before I can proceed, I must recover my eyes.

Two o'clock.

This fellow's name is Macpherson. His partner's M'Dermot. This is Macpherson's account of the matter.

Wilson hired them to carry his young lady to Paddington—To Paddington! A vile dog!—

They objected distance and danger; the latter, as Macpherson owns, to heighten the value of the service.

As to the danger, Wilson told him, they would be met by three others of his fellow-servants, armed, at the first fields: and as to the distance, they would be richly rewarded; and he gave them a crown apiece earnest, and treated them besides with brandy.

To prevent their curiosity, and entirely to remove their difficulties, the villain told them, that his young lady was an heiress, and had agreed to go off from the masquerade with her lover: but that the gentleman would not appear to them till she came to the very house, to which she was to be conveyed.

She thinks, said the hellish villain, that she is to be carried to May-Fair chapel, and to be married directly; and that the minister (unseasonable as the hour is) will be there in readiness. But the gentleman, who is a man of the utmost honour, intends first to try whether he cannot obtain her friends' consent. So when she finds her way lengthened, proceeded the vile wretch, she will perhaps be frightened,

and will ask me questions. I would not for the world disoblige her; but here she must be cheated for her own sake; and when all is over, will value me the more for the innocent imposture. But whatever orders she may give you, observe none but mine, and follow me. You shall be richly rewarded, repeated the miscreant. Should she even cry out, mind it not: she is full of fears, and hardly holds in one mind for an hour together.

He farther cautioned them not to answer any questions which might possibly be asked of them, by the person who should conduct his young lady to her chair; but refer to himself: and in case any other chairs were to go in company with hers, he bid them fall behind, and follow his flambeau.

Macpherson says, that she drew the curtains close (because of her dress, no doubt) the moment I had left her, after seeing her in the chair.

The fellows, thus prepossessed and instructed, speeded away, without stopping for our chairs. Yet my cousin must have heard me give that direction.

They had carried her a great way before she called out: and *then* she called three times before they would hear her: at the third time they stopt, and her servant asked her commands. Where am I, William? Just at home, madam, answered he. Surely you have taken a strange round-about way. We *are* come about, said the rascal, on purpose to avoid the crowd of chairs and coaches.

They proceeded onwards, and were joined by three men, as Wilson had told them they would; but they fancied one of them to be a gentleman; for he was muffled up in a cloak, and had a silver-hilted sword in his hand: but he spake not. He gave no directions: and all three kept aloof, that they might not be seen by her.

At Marybone, she again called out; William, Wil-

liam, said she, with vehemence: the Lord have mercy upon me! Where are you going to carry me? Chairmen, stop! Stop, chairmen! Set me down!—William!—Call my servant, chairmen!—

Dear soul! Her servant! Her devil!

The chairmen called him. They lifted up the head. The side-curtains were still drawn, and M'Dermot stood so close, that she could not see far before her. Did you not tell me, said the villain to them, that it was not far about?—See how you have frighted my lady!—Madam, we are now almost at home.

They proceeded with her, saying, they had indeed mistaken their way; but they were just there, and hurried on.

She then undrew the side-curtains—Good God of heaven protect me! they heard her say—I am in the midst of fields—They were then at Lissom Green.

They heard her pray; and Macpherson said, he began then to conclude, that the lady was too much frightened, and *too pious* to be in a love-plot.

But, nevertheless, beckoned by their villanous guide, they hurried on: and then she screamed out, and happening to see one of the three men, she begged his help for God's sake.

The fellow blustered at the chairmen, and bid them stop. She asked for Grosvenor Street. She was to be carried, she said, to Grosvenor Street.

She was just there, that fellow said—It can't be, Sir! it can't be!—Don't I see fields all about me?—I am in the midst of fields, Sir.

Grosvenor Square, madam, replied that villain; the trees and garden of Grosvenor Square.

What a strange way have you come about, cried her miscreant! And then trod out his flambeau; while another fellow took the chairmen's lantern

from them; and they had only a little glimmering star-light to guide them.

She then, poor dear soul! screamed so dismally, that Macpherson said, it went to his heart to hear her. But they following Wilson, who told them they were just *landed*, that was his word, he led them up a long garden-walk, by a back way. One of the three men having got before, opened the garden-door, and held it in his hand; and by the time they got to the house to which the garden seemed to belong, the dear creature ceased screaming.

They too well saw the cause, when they stopt with her. She was in a fit.

Two women, by the assistance of the person in the cloak, helped her out, with great seeming tenderness. They said something in praise of her beauty, and expressed themselves concerned for her, as if they were afraid she was past recovery: which apparently startled the man in the cloak.

Wilson entered the house with those who carried in the dear creature; but soon came out to the chairmen. They saw the man in the cloak (who hung about the villain and hugged him, as in joy) give the rascal money; who then put a guinea into each of their hands; and conveyed them through the garden again, to the door at which they entered; but refused them light, even so much as that of their own candle and lantern. However, he sent another man with them, who led them over rough and dirty by-ways into a path that pointed London-ward; but plainly so much about with design to make it difficult for them to find out the place again.

* *

The other fellow is brought hither. He tells exactly the same story.

I asked of both, what sort of a man he in the cloak

was: but he so carefully muffled himself up, and so little appeared to them, either walking after them, or at the house, that I could gain no light from their description.

On their promise to be forth-coming, I have suffered them to go with Lady Betty's chairmen to try if they can trace out their own footsteps, and find the place.

How many hopeless things must a man do, in an exigence, who knows not what is right to be done!

* *

I have enquired of Lady Betty, who it was that told her, Mr. Greville was not gone out of town, but intended to lie perdue; and she named her informant. I asked how the discourse came in? She owned, a little awkwardly. I asked whether that lady knew Mr. Greville? She could not say whether she did, or not.

I went to that lady: Mrs. Preston, in New Bond Street. She had her intelligence, she told me, from Sir Hargrave Pollexfen; who had hinted to her, that he should take such notice of Mr. Greville, as might be attended with consequences; and she was the readier to intimate this to Lady Betty, in order to prevent mischief.

Now, Mr. Selby, as the intimation that the dark-lantern figure at the masquerade was Mr. Greville, came from Sir Hargrave, and nobody else; and we saw nothing of him ourselves; how do we know—And yet Mr. Greville intended that we should believe him to be out of town.—Yet even that intimation came from Sir Hargrave—And furthermore, was it not likely that he would take as much care to conceal himself from Sir Hargrave, as from us?—But I will go instantly to Sir Hargrave's house. He was to dine at home, and with company. If I cannot

see him; if he should be absent—But no more till I return.

* *

O Mr. Selby! I believe I have wronged Mr. Greville. The dear soul, I am afraid, is fallen into even worse hands than his.

I went to Sir Hargrave's house. He was *not* at home. He *was* at home. He had company with him. He was not to be spoken with. These were the different answers given me by his porter, with as much confusion as I had impatience; and yet it was evident to me, that he had his lesson given him. In short, I have reason to think, that Sir Hargrave came not home all night. The man in the cloak, I doubt, was he. Now does all that Sir John Allestree said of the malicious wickedness of this devilish man, and his arrogant behaviour to our dear Miss Byron, on her rejecting him, come fresh into my memory. And is she, can she be, fallen into the power of such a man? —Rather, much rather, may my first surmises prove true. Greville is surely (exceptionable as he is) a better man, at least a better-natured man, than this; and he can have no thoughts less honourable than marriage: but this villain, if he *be* the villain—I cannot, I dare not, pursue the thought.

* *

The four chairmen are just returned. They think they have found the place; but having gained some intelligence (intelligence which distracts me!) they hurried back for directions.

They had asked a neighbouring alehouse-keeper, if there were not a long garden (belonging to the house they suspected) and a back-door out of it to a dirty lane and fields. He answered in the affirmative. The front of this house faces the road.

They called for some hot liquors; and asked the

landlord after the owners. He knew nothing of harm of them, he said. They had lived there near a twelvemonth in reputation. The family consisted of a widow, whose name is Awberry, her son, and two daughters. The son (a man of about thirty years of age) has a place in the Custom-house, and only came down on a Saturday, and went up on Monday. But an odd circumstance, he said, had alarmed him that very morning.

He was at first a little shy of telling what it was. He loved, he said, to mind his own business: what other people did was nothing to him: but, at last, he told them, that about six o'clock in the morning he was waked by the trampling of horses; and looking out of his window, saw a chariot-and-six, and three or four men on horseback, at the widow Awberry's door. He got up. The footmen and coachmen were very *hush*, not calling for a drop of liquor, though his doors were open: a rare instance, he said, where there were so many men-servants together, and a coachman one of them. This, he said, could not but give a greater edge to his curiosity.

About seven o'clock, one of the widow's daughters came to the door, with a lighted candle in her hand, and directed the chariot to drive up close to the house. The alehouse-keeper then slipt into an arbour-like porch, next door to the widow's; where he had not been three minutes before he saw two persons come to the door; the one a tall gentleman in laced clothes, who had his arms about the other, a person of middling stature, wrapt up in a scarlet cloak; and resisting, as one in great distress, the other's violence, and begging not to be put into the chariot, in a voice and accent that evidently shewed it was a woman.

The gentleman made vehement protestations of

honour; but lifted the lady into the chariot. She struggled, and seemed to be in agonies of grief; and on being lifted in, and the gentleman going in after her, she screamed out for help; and he observed in the struggling, that she had on, under her cloak, a silver-laced habit [the masquerade habit, no doubt!]: her screaming grew fainter and fainter, and her voice sounded to him as if her mouth were stopped: and the gentleman seemed to speak high, as if he threatened her.

Away drove the chariot. The servants rode after it.

In about half an hour, a coach and four came to the widow's door; the widow and her two daughters went into it, and it took the same road.

The alehouse-keeper had afterwards the curiosity to ask the maid-servant, an ignorant country wench, whither her mistresses went so early in the morning? She answered they were gone to Windsor, or that way, and would not return, she believed, in a week.

O this damned Sir Hargrave! He has a house upon the forest. I have no doubt but he is the villain. Who knows what injuries she might have sustained before she was forced into the chariot?—God give me patience! Dear soul! Her prayers! Her struggling! Her crying out for help! Her mouth stopt! O the villain!

I have ordered as many men and horses as two of my friends can furnish me with, to be added to two of my own (we shall be nine in all) to get ready with all speed. I will pursue the villain to the world's end, but I will find him.

Our first course shall be to his house at Windsor. If we find him not there, we will proceed to that Bagenhall's, near Reading.

It would be but losing time, were I to go now to Paddington. And when the vile widow and her

daughters are gone from home, and only an ignorant wench left, what can we learn of her more than is already told us?

I have, however, accepted Lady Betty's offer of her steward's going with the two chairmen, to get what farther intelligence he can from Paddington, against my return.

I shall take what I have written with me, to form from it a letter less hurrying, less alarming, for your perusal, than this that I have written at such snatches of time, and under such dreadful uncertainties, would be to you, were I to send it; that is to say, if I have time, and if I am able to write with any certainty—— O that dreaded certainty!

At four in the morning the six men I borrow, and myself, and two of my servants, well armed, are to rendezvous at Hyde-Park Corner. It is grievous that another night must pass. But so many people cannot be got together as two or three might.

My poor wife has made me promise to take the assistance of peace-officers, wherever I find either the villain, or the suffering angel.

Where the road parts we shall divide, and enquire at every turnpike; and shall agree upon our places of meeting.

I am harassed to death: but my mind is the greatest sufferer.

* * *

O my dear Mr. Selby! We *have* tidings—God be praised, we have tidings—Not so happy indeed as were to be wished: yet the dear creature is living, and in honourable hands—God be praised!

Read the inclosed letter directed to me.

SIR,

Miss Byron is in safe and honourable hands. The first moment she could give any account of

herself, she besought me to quiet your heart, and your lady's, with this information.

She has been cruelly treated.

Particulars, at present, she cannot give.

She was many hours speechless.

But don't fright yourselves: her fits, though not less frequent, are weaker and weaker.

The bearer will acquaint you who my brother is; to whom you owe the preservation and safety of the loveliest woman in England; and he will direct you to a house where you will be welcome with your lady (for Miss Byron cannot be removed) to convince yourselves that all possible care is taken of her, by, Sir,

Your humble servant,

Friday, February 17. CHARLOTTE GRANDISON.

In fits!—Has been cruelly treated!—Many hours speechless!—Cannot be removed!—Her solicitude, though hardly herself, *for our ease!*—Dearest, dear creature!—But you will rejoice with me, my cousins, that she is in such honourable hands.

What I have written must now go. I have no time to transcribe.

I have sent to my two friends to let them know, that I shall not have occasion for their people's assistance.

She is at a nobleman's house, the Earl of L. near Colnebrook.

My wife, harassed and fatigued in mind as she has been on this occasion, and poorly in health, wanted to go with me: but it is best first for me to see how the dear creature is.

I shall set out before day, on horseback. My servant shall carry with him a portmanteau of things, ordered by my wife. My cousin must have made a

strange appearance in her masquerade dress, to her deliverer.

The honest man who brought the letter [he looks remarkably so; but had he a less agreeable countenance, he would have been received by us as an angel, for his happy tidings] was but just returned from Windsor, whither he had been sent early in the morning, to transact some business, when he was dispatched away to us with the welcome letter. He could not therefore be so particular as we wished him. What he gathered was from the housekeeper; the men-servants, who were in the fray [a fray there was!] being gone to town with their master. But what we learnt from him, is, briefly, as follows:

His master is Sir Charles Grandison; a gentleman who has not been long in England. I have often heard mention of his father, Sir Thomas, who died not long ago. This honest man knew not when to stop in his master's praise. He gives his young lady also an excellent character.

Sir Charles was going to town in his chariot and six when he met (most happily met!) our distressed cousin.

Sir Hargrave *is* the villain!

I am heartily sorry for suspecting Mr. Greville.

Sir Charles had earnest business in town; and he proceeded thither, after he had rescued the dear creature, and committed her to the care of his sister.—God for ever bless him!

The vile Sir Hargrave, as the servant understood, was wounded. Sir Charles, it seems, was also hurt. Thank God it was so slightly, as not to hinder him from pursuing his journey to town after the glorious act.

I would have given the honest man a handsome gratuity: but he so earnestly besought me to excuse him; declaring that he was under an obligation to

the most generous of masters to decline all gifts, that I was obliged to withdraw my hand.

I will speed this away by Richard Fennell. I will soon send you farther particulars by the post: not unhappy ones, I hope.

Excuse, mean time, all that is amiss in a letter the greatest part of which was written in such dreadful uncertainty, and believe, that I will be

Ever yours,

ARCHIBALD REEVES.

LETTER XXVI.

MR. REEVES TO GEORGE SELBY, ESQ.

DEAR SIR, Saturday, February 18.

I AM just returned from visiting my beloved cousin. You will be glad of every minute particular, as I can give it to you, relating to this shocking affair; and to her protector and his sister. There are not such another brother and sister in England.

I got to the hospitable mansion by nine this morning. I enquired after Miss Byron's health; and, on giving in my name, was shewn into a handsome parlour, elegantly furnished.

Immediately came down to me a very agreeable young lady; Miss Grandison. I gave her a thousand thanks for the honour of her letter, and the joyful information it had given me of the safety of one so deservedly dear to us.

She *must* be an excellent young lady, answered she. I have just left her—You must not see her yet—

Ah, madam, said I, and looked surprised and grieved, I believe—

Don't affright yourself, Sir. Miss Byron will do very well: but she must be kept quiet. She has had a happy deliverance—She—

O madam, interrupted I, your generous, your noble brother—

Is the best of men, Mr. Reeves: his delight is in doing good.—And, as to this adventure, it has made him, I am sure, a very happy man.

But is my cousin, madam, so ill, that I cannot be allowed to see her for one moment?

She is but just come out of a fit. She fell into it in the relation she would have made of her story, on mentioning the villain's name by whom she has suffered. She could give only broken and imperfect accounts of herself all day yesterday, or you had heard from me sooner. When you see her, you must be very cautious of what you say to her. We have a skilful physician, by whose advice we proceed.

God for ever bless you, madam!

He has not long left her. He advises quiet. She has had a very bad night. Could she compose herself, could she get a little natural rest, the cure is performed. Have you breakfasted, Sir?

Breakfasted, madam! My impatience to see my cousin allowed me not to think of breakfast.

You must breakfast with me, Sir. And when that is over, if she is tolerable, we will acquaint her with your arrival, and go up together. I read your impatience, Sir: we will make but a very short breakfasting. I was just *going* to breakfast.

She rang. It was brought in.

I longed, I said, as we sat at tea, to be acquainted with the particulars of the happy deliverance.

We avoid asking any questions that may affect her. I know very little of the particulars myself. My brother was in haste to get to town. The servants that were with him at the time, hardly dismounted: he

doubted not but the lady (to whom he referred me for the gratifying my curiosity) would be able to tell me every thing. But she fell into fits, and, as I told you, was so ill, on the recollection of what she had suffered—

Good God! said I, what *must* the dear creature have suffered!

—That we thought fit to restrain our curiosity, and so must you, till we see Sir Charles. I expect him before noon.

I am told, madam, that there was a skirmish. I hope Sir Charles—

I hope so too, Mr. Reeves, interrupted she. I long to see my brother as much as you can do to see your cousin—But on my apprehensions, he assured me upon his honour, that he was but very slightly hurt. Sir Charles is no qualifier, Sir, when he stakes his honour, be the occasion either light or serious.

I said, I doubted not but she was very much surprised at a lady's being brought in by Sir Charles, and in a dress so fantastic.

I was, Sir. I had not left my chamber: but hastened down at the first word, to receive and welcome the stranger. My maid, out of breath, burst into my room—Sir Charles, madam, beseeches you this moment to come down. He has saved a lady from robbers (that was her report) a very fine lady! and is come back with her. He begs that you will come down this instant.

I was too much surprised at my brother's unexpected return, and too much affected with the lady's visible grief and terror, to attend to her dress, when I first went down. She was sitting, dreadfully trembling, and Sir Charles next her, in a very tender manner, assuring her of his and of his sister's kindest protection. I saluted her, continued the lady: Wel-

come, welcome, thrice welcome to this house, and to me—

She threw herself on one knee to me. Distress had too much humbled her. Sir Charles and I raised her to her seat. You see before you, madam, said she, a strange creature, and looked at her dress: but I hope you will believe I am an innocent one. This vile appearance was not my choice. Fie upon me! I must be thus dressed out for a masquerade: Hated diversion! I never had a notion of it. Think not hardly, Sir, turning to Sir Charles, her hands clasped and held up, of her whom you have so generously delivered. Think not hardly of me, madam, turning to me: I am not a bad creature. That vile, vile man!—She could say no more.

Charlotte, said my brother, you will make it your first care to raise the spirits of this injured beauty: your next, to take her directions, and inform her friends of her safety. Such an admirable young lady as this, cannot be missed an hour, without exciting the fears of all her friends for her. I repeat, madam, that you are in honourable hands. My sister will have pleasure in obliging you.

She wished to be conveyed to town; but looking at her dress, I offered her clothes of mine; and my brother said, if she were very earnest, and thought herself able to go, he would take horse, and leave the chariot, and he was sure that I would attend her thither.

But before she could declare her acceptance of this offer, as she seemed joyfully ready to do, her spirits failed her, and she sunk down at my feet.

Sir Charles just staid to see her come to herself; and then—Sister, said he, the lady cannot be removed. Let Dr. Holmes be sent for instantly. I know you will give her your best attendance. I will be with you before noon to-morrow. The lady is

too low, and too weak, to be troubled with questions now. Johnson will be back from Windsor. Let him take her commands to any of her friends. Adieu, dear madam—[Your cousin, Sir, seemed likely to faint again] Support yourself. Repeating, You are in safe and honourable hands; bowing to her, as she bowed in return, but spoke not.—Adieu, Charlotte: and away went the best of brothers.

And God Almighty bless him, said I, wherever he goes!

Miss Grandison then told me, that the house I was in belonged to the Earl of L. who had lately married her eldest sister: about three months ago, they set out, she said, to pay a visit to my lord's estate and relations in Scotland, for the first time, and to settle some affairs there: they were expected back in a week or fortnight: she came down but last Tuesday, and *that* in order to give directions for every-thing to be prepared for their reception. It was happy for your cousin, said she, that I obtained the favour of my brother's company; and that he was obliged to be in town this morning. He intended to come back to carry me to town this evening. We are a family of love, Mr. Reeves. We are true brothers and sisters—But why do I trouble you with these things now? We shall be better acquainted. I am charmed with Miss Byron.

She was so good as to hurry the breakfast; and when it was over, conducted me up stairs. She bid me stay at the door, and stept gently to the bed-side, and opening the curtain, I heard the voice of our cousin.

Dear madam, what trouble do I give! were her words.

Still talk of trouble, Miss Byron? answered Miss Grandison, with an amiable familiarity; you will not forbear—Will you promise me not to be surprised at the arrival of your cousin Reeves?

I do promise—I shall rejoice to see him.

Miss Grandison called to me.—I approached: and catching my cousin's held-out hand.—Thank God, thank God, best beloved of a hundred hearts! said I, that once more I behold you! that once more I see you in safe and honourable hands!—I will not tell you what we have all suffered.

No, don't, said she—You need not—But, O my cousin! I have fallen into the company of angels.

Forbear, gently patting her hand, forbear these high flights, said the kind lady, or I shall beat my charming patient. I shall not think you in a way to be quite well, till you *descend.*

She whispered me, that the doctor had expressed fears for her head, if she were not kept quiet. Then raising her voice, Your cousin's gratitude, Mr. Reeves, is excessive. You must allow me, smiling, to beat her. When she is well, she shall talk of angels, and of what she pleases.

But, my dear Mr. Selby, we who know how her heart overflows with sentiments of gratitude, on every common obligation, and even on but *intentional* ones, can easily account for the high sense she must have of those she lies under for such a deliverance by the brother, and of such kind treatment from the sister, both absolute strangers, till her distresses threw her into their protection.

I will only ask my dear Miss Byron *one* question, said I (forgetting the caution given me below by Miss Grandison), Whether this villain, by his violence—[meant marriage, I was going to say] But interrupting me, You shall not, Mr. Reeves, said Miss Grandison, smiling, ask half a question, that may revive disagreeable remembrances. Is she not alive, and here, and in a way to be well? Have patience till she is able to tell you all.

My cousin was going to speak: My dear, said the

lady, you shall not answer Mr. Reeves's question, if it be a question that will induce you to look backward. At present you must look only forward. And are you not in my care, and in Sir Charles Grandison's protection?

I have done, madam, said I, bowing—The desire of taking vengeance—

Hush, Mr. Reeves!—Surely!—Smiling, and holding her finger to her lip.

It is a patient's duty, said my cousin, to submit to the prescriptions of her kind physician: but were I ever to forgive the author of my distresses, it must be for his being the occasion of bringing me into the knowledge of such a lady: and yet to lie under the weight of obligations that I never can return—Here she stopt.

I took this as a happy indication that the last violence was not offered: if it had, she would not have mentioned forgiving the author of her distress.

As to what you say of obligation, Miss Byron, returned Miss Grandison, let *your* heart answer for *mine*, had you and I changed situations. And if, on such a supposition, you can think, that your humanity would have been so extraordinary a matter, then shall you be at liberty, when you are recovered, to say a thousand fine things: till when, pray be silent on this subject.

Then turning to me, See how much afraid your cousin Byron is of lying under obligation. I am afraid she has a proud heart: has she not a *very* proud heart, Mr. Reeves?

She has a very *grateful* one, madam, replied I.

She turned to my cousin: Will you, Miss Byron, be easy under the obligations you talk of, or will you not?

I submit to your superiority, madam, in every thing, replied my cousin; bowing her head.

She then asked me, If I had let her friends in the country know of this shocking affair?

I had suspected Mr. Greville, I said, and had written in confidence to her uncle Selby—

O my poor grandmamma—O my good aunt Selby, and my Lucy—I hope—

Miss Grandison interposed, humorously, interrupting—I will have nothing said that begins with *O.* Indeed, Miss Byron, Mr. Reeves, I will not trust you together—Cannot you have patience—

We both asked her pardon. My cousin desired leave to rise—But these odious clothes, said she—

If you are well enough, child, replied Miss Grandison, you shall rise, and have no need to see those odious clothes, as you call them. I told them Mrs. Reeves had sent her some of her clothes. The portmanteau was ordered to be brought up.

Then Miss Grandison, sitting down on the bed by my cousin, took her hand; and, feeling her pulse, Are you sure, my patient, that you shall not suffer if you are permitted to rise? Will you be calm, serene, easy? Will you banish curiosity? Will you endeavour to avoid recollection?

I will do my endeavour, answered my cousin.

Miss Grandison then rung, and a maid-servant coming up, Jenny, said she, pray give your best assistance to my lovely patient. But be sure don't let her hurry her spirits. I will lead Mr. Reeves into my dressing-room. And when you are dressed, my dear, we will either return to you here, or expect you to join us there, at your pleasure.

And then she obligingly conducted me into her dressing-room, and excused herself for refusing to let us talk of interesting subjects. I am rejoiced, said she, to find her more sedate and composed than hitherto she has been. Her head has been greatly in danger. Her talk, for some hours, when she *did*

talk, was so wild and incoherent, and she was so full of terror, on every one's coming in her sight, that I would not suffer any-body to attend her but myself.

I left her not, continued Miss Grandison, till eleven: and the housekeeper, and my maid, sat up in her room all the rest of the night.

I arose before my usual time to attend her. I slept not well myself. I did nothing but dream of robbers, rescues, and murders: such an impression had the distress of this young lady made on my mind.

They made me a poor report, proceeded she, of the night she had passed. And, as I told you, she fainted away this morning, a little before you came, on her endeavouring to give me some account of her affecting story.

Let me tell you, Mr. Reeves, I am as curious as you can be, to know the whole of what has befallen her. But her heart is tender and delicate: her spirits are low; and we must not pull down with one hand, what we build up with the other: my brother also will expect a good account of my charge.

I blessed her for her goodness. And finding her desirous of knowing all that I could tell her, of our cousin's character, family, and lovers, I gave her a brief history, which extremely pleased her. Good God, said she, what a happiness is it, that such a lady, in such a distress, should meet with a man as excellent, and as much admired, as herself! My brother, Mr. Reeves, can never marry but he must break half a score hearts. Forgive me, that I bring *him* in, whenever any good person, or thing, or action, is spoken of. Every-body, I believe, who is strongly possessed of a subject, makes every-thing seen, heard, or read of, that bears the least resemblance, turn into and serve to illustrate that subject.

But here I will conclude this letter, in order to send it by the post. Besides, I have been so much fatigued in body and mind, and my wife has also been so much disturbed in *her* mind, that I must give way to a call of rest.

I will pursue the subject, the now agreeable subject, in the morning; and perhaps shall dispatch what I shall farther write, as you must be impatient for it, by an especial messenger.

Sir Rowland was here twice yesterday, and once to-day. My wife caused him to be told, that Miss Byron, by a sudden call, has been obliged to go a little way out of town for two or three days.

He proposes to set out for Caermarthen the beginning of next week. He hoped he should not be denied taking his *corporal* leave of her.

If our cousin has a good day to-morrow, and no return of her fits, she proposes to be in town on Monday. I am to wait on her, and Sir Charles and his sister, at breakfast on Monday morning, and to attend her home; where there will be joy indeed, on her arrival.

Pray receive for yourself, and make for me to your lady, and all friends, my compliments of congratulation.

I have not had either leisure or inclination, to enquire after the villain, who has given all this disturbance.

Ever, ever yours,

Saturday night. ARCHIBALD REEVES.

LETTER XXVII.

FROM MR. REEVES TO GEORGE SELBY, ESQ.

IN CONTINUATION.

Miss Grandison went to my cousin, to see how she bore rising, supposing her near dressed.

She soon returned to me. The most charming woman, I think, said she, I ever saw! But she trembles so, that I have persuaded her to lie down. I answered for you, that you would stay dinner.

I must beg excuse, madam. I have an excellent wife. She loves Miss Byron as her life: she will be impatient to know—

Well, well, well, say no more, Mr. Reeves: my brother has redeemed one prisoner, and his sister has taken another: and glad you may be, that it is no worse.

I bowed, and looked silly, I believe.

You *may* look, and beg and pray, Mr. Reeves. When you know me better, you'll find me a very whimsical creature: but you must stay to see Sir Charles. Would you go home to your wife with half your errand? She won't thank you for that, I can tell you, let her be as good a woman as the best. But, to comfort you, we give not into every modern fashion. We dine earlier than most people of our condition. My brother, though in the main, above singularity, will nevertheless, in things he thinks right, be governed by his own rules, which are the laws of reason and convenience. You are on horseback; and, were I you, such good news as I should have to carry, considering what *might* have happened, would give me wings, and make me fly through the air with it.

I was about to speak: Come, come, I will have no denial, interrupted she; I shall have a double pleasure, if you are present when Sir Charles comes, on hearing his account of what happened. You are a good man, and have a *reasonable quantity* of *wonder* and *gratitude*, to heighten a common case into the *marvellous*. So sit down, and be quiet.

I was equally delighted and surprised at her humorous raillery, but could not answer a single word. If it be midnight before you will suffer me to depart, thought I, I will not make another objection.

While this amiable lady was thus entertaining me, we heard the trampling of horses—My brother! said she, I hope!—He comes! pardon the fondness of a sister, who speaks from sensible effects—A father and a brother in one!

Sir Charles entered the room. He addressed himself to me in a most polite manner. Mr. Reeves! said he, as I understand from below—Then turning to his sister, Excuse me, Charlotte. I heard this worthy gentleman was with you: and I was impatient to know how my fair guest—

Miss Byron is in a good way, I hope, interrupted she, but very weak and low-spirited. She arose and dressed; but I have prevailed on her to lie down again.

Then turning to me, with a noble air, he both welcomed and congratulated me.

Sir Charles Grandison is indeed a fine figure. He is in the bloom of youth. I don't know that I have ever seen a handsomer or genteeler man. Well might his sister say, that if he married, he would break half a score hearts. O this vile Pollexfen! thought I, at the moment; could he draw upon, has he hurt, such a man as this?

After pouring out my acknowledgments, in the name of several families, as well as in my own, I

could not but enquire into the nature of the hurt he had received.

A very trifle!—My coat only was hurt, Mr. Reeves. The skin of my left shoulder raked a little, putting his hand upon it.

Thank God, said I: Thank God, said Miss Grandison—But so *near!*—O the villain! what might it have been!—

Sir Hargrave, pent up in a chariot, had great disadvantage. My reflections on the event of yesterday, yield me the more pleasure, as I have, on enquiry, understood that he will do well again, if he will be ruled. I would not, on any account, have had his instant death to answer for. But no more of this just now. Give me the particulars of the young lady's state of health. I left her in a very bad way.—You had advice?

Miss Grandison gave her brother an account of all that had been done; and of every-thing that had passed since he went away; as also of the character and excellencies of the lady whom he had rescued.

I confirmed what she said in my cousin's favour; and he very gratefully thanked his sister for her care, as a man would do for one the nearest and dearest to him.

We then besought him to give an account of the glorious action, which had restored to all that knew her, the darling of our hearts.

I will relate all he said, in the first person, as nearly in his own words as possible, and will try to hit the coolness with which he told the agreeable story.

'You know, sister, said he, the call I had to town. It was happy, that I yielded to your importunity to attend you hither.

'About two miles on this side Hounslow, I saw a

chariot-and-six driving at a great rate. I also had ordered Jerry to drive pretty fast.

'The coachman seemed inclined to dispute the way with mine. This occasioned a few moments stop to both. I ordered my coachman to break the way. I don't love to stand upon trifles. My horses were fresh: I had not come far.

'The curtain of the chariot we met, was pulled down. I saw not who was in it; but on turning out of the way, I knew, by the arms, it was Sir Hargrave Pollexfen's.

'There was in it a gentleman, who immediately pulled up the canvas.

'I saw, however, before he drew it up, another person, wrapt up in a man's scarlet cloak.

'For God's sake! help, help! cried out the person: For God's sake, help!

'I ordered the coachman to stop.

'Drive on, said the gentleman; cursing his coachman: drive on, when I bid you.

'Help! again cried she, but with a voice as if her mouth was half stopt.

'I called to my servant on horseback to stop the postilion of the other chariot: and I bid Sir Hargrave's coachman proceed at his peril.

'Sir Hargrave called out, on the contrary side of the chariot (his canvas being still up on that next me) with vehement execrations, to drive on.

'I alighted, and went round to the other side of the chariot.

'Again the lady endeavoured to cry out. I saw Sir Hargrave struggle to pull over her mouth a handkerchief, which was tied round her head. He swore outrageously.

'The moment she beheld me, she spread out both her hands—For God's sake—

'Sir Hargrave Pollexfen, said I, by the arms.—You are engaged, I doubt, in a very bad affair.

'I *am* Sir Hargrave Pollexfen; and am carrying a fugitive wife—Your *own* wife, Sir Hargrave!

'Yes, by G—, said he; and she was going to elope from me at a damned masquerade—See! drawing aside the cloak, detected in the very dress!

'O no! no! no! said the lady—

'Proceed, coachman, said he, and cursed and swore.

'Let me ask the lady a question, Sir Hargrave.

'You are impertinent, Sir. Who the devil are you?

'Are you, madam, Lady Pollexfen? said I.

'O no! no! no!—was all she could say—

'Two of my servants came about me; a third held the head of the horse on which the postilion sat. Three of Sir Hargrave's approached on their horses; but seemed as if afraid to come too near, and parleyed together.

'Have an eye to those fellows, said I. Some base work is on foot. You'll presently be aided by passengers. Sirrah, said I to the coachman (for he lashed the horses on) proceed at your peril.

'Sir Hargrave then, with violent curses and threatenings, ordered him to drive over every one that opposed him.

'Coachman, proceed at your peril, said I. Madam, will you—

'O Sir, Sir, Sir, relieve, help me for God's sake! I am in a villain's hands! Tricked, vilely tricked into a villain's hands. Help, help, for God's sake!

'Do you, said I, to Frederick, cut the traces, if you cannot otherwise stop this chariot. Bid Jerry cut the reins, and then seize as many of those fellows as you can. Leave Sir Hargrave to me.

'The lady continued screaming and crying out for help.

'Sir Hargrave drew his sword, which he had held between his knees in the scabbard; and then called upon his servants to fire at all that opposed his progress.

'My servants, Sir Hargrave, have fire-arms as well as yours. They will not dispute my orders. Don't provoke me to give the word.

'Then addressing the lady, Will you, madam, put yourself into my protection?

'O yes, yes, yes, with my whole heart—Dear good Sir, protect me!

'I opened the chariot door. Sir Hargrave made a pass at me. Take *that*, and be damn'd to you, for your insolence, scoundrel! said he.

'I was aware of his thrust, and put it by; but his sword a little raked my shoulder.

'My sword was in my hand; but undrawn.

'The chariot-door remaining open (I was not so ceremonious, as to let down the foot-step to take the gentleman out) I seized him by the collar before he could recover himself from the pass he had made at me; and with a jerk, and a kind of twist, laid him under the hind-wheel of his chariot.

'I wrenched his sword from him, and snapped it, and flung the two pieces over my head.

'His coachman cried out for his master. Mine threatened *his* if he stirred. The postilion was a boy. My servant had made him dismount, before he joined the other two, whom I had ordered aloud to endeavour to seize (but my view was only to terrify) wretches who, knowing the badness of their cause, were before terrified.

'Sir Hargrave's mouth and face were very bloody. I believe I might hurt him with the pommel of my sword.

'One of his legs, in his sprawling, had got between the spokes of his chariot-wheel. I thought that was a fortunate circumstance for preventing further mischief; and charged his coachman not to stir with the chariot, for his master's sake.

'He cried out, cursed, and swore. I believe he was bruised with the fall. The jerk was violent. So little able to support an offence, Sir Hargrave, upon his own principles, should not have been so ready to give it.

'I had not drawn my sword: I hope I never shall be provoked to do it in a private quarrel. I should not, however, have scrupled to draw it, on such an occasion as this, had there been an absolute necessity for it.

'The lady, though greatly terrified, had disengaged herself from the man's cloak. I had not leisure to consider her dress; but I was struck with her figure, and more with her terror.

'I offered my hand. I thought not now of the foot-step, any more than I did before: she not of any-thing, as it seemed, but her deliverance.

'Have you not read, Mr. Reeves (Pliny, I think, gives the relation), of a frighted bird, that, pursued by a hawk, flew for protection into the bosom of a man passing by?

'In like manner, your lovely cousin, the moment I returned to the chariot-door, instead of accepting of my offered hand, threw herself into my arms.—O save me! save me!—She was ready to faint. She could not, I believe, have stood.

'I carried her round Sir Hargrave's horses, and seated her in my chariot.—Be assured, madam, said I, that you are in honourable hands. I will convey you to my sister, who is a young lady of honour and virtue.

'She looked out at one window, then at the other,

in visible terror, as if fearing still Sir Hargrave. Fear nothing, said I: I will attend you in a moment. I shut the chariot door.

'I then went backward a few paces (keeping, however, the lady in my eye) to see what had become of my servants.

'It seems, that at their first coming up pretty near with Sir Hargrave's horsemen, they presented their pistols.

'What shall we do, Wilkins, or Wilson, or some such name, said one of Sir Hargrave's men to another, all three of them on their defence? Fly for it, answered the fellow. We may swing for this. I see our master down. There may be murder.

'Their consciences put them to flight.

'My servants pursued them a little way; but were returning to support their master, just as I had put the lady into my chariot.

'I saw Sir Hargrave at a distance, on his legs, supported by his coachman. He limped; leaned his whole weight upon his servant: and seemed to be in agonies.

'I bid one of my servants tell him who I was.

'He cursed me, and threatened vengeance. He cursed my servant; and still more outrageously his own scoundrels, as he called them.

'I then stept back to my chariot.

'Miss Byron had, through terror, sunk down at the bottom of it; where she lay panting, and could only say, on my approach, Save me! save me!

'I re-assured her. I lifted her on the seat, and brought her to my sister; and what followed, I suppose, Charlotte, bowing to her, you have told Mr. Reeves.'

We were both about to break out in grateful applauses: but Sir Charles, as if designing to hinder us; proceeded:

'You see, Mr. Reeves, what an easy conquest this was. You see what a small degree of merit falls to my share. The violator's conscience was against him. The consciences of his fellows were on my side. My own servants are honest worthy men. They love their master. In a good cause I would set any three of them against six who were engaged in a bad one. Vice is the greatest coward in the world, when it knows it will be resolutely opposed. And what have good men, engaged in a right cause, to fear?'

What an admirable man is Sir Charles Grandison! —Thus thinking! thus acting!

I explained to Sir Charles who this Wilson was, whom the others consulted, and were directed by; and what an implement in this black transaction.

To what other man's protection in the world, Mr. Selby, could our Miss Byron have been obliged, and so little mischief followed?

Sir Hargrave, it seems, returned back to town. What a recreant figure, my dear Mr. Selby, must he make, even to himself!—A villain!

Sir Charles says, that the turnpike-men at Smallbury Green told his servants, on their attending him to town after the happy rescue, a formidable story of a robbery committed a little beyond Hounslow by half a dozen villains on horseback, upon a gentleman in a chariot-and-six; which had passed through that turnpike but half an hour before he was attacked; and that the gentleman, about an hour and half before Sir Charles went through, returned to town, wounded, for advice; and they heard him groan as he passed through the turnpike.

I should add one circumstance, said Sir Charles: Do you know, Charlotte, that you have a rake for your brother?—A man on horseback, it seems, came to the turnpike gate, whilst the turnpike-men were

telling my servants this story. Nothing in the world, said he, but two young rakes in their chariots-and-six, one robbing the other of a lady. I, and two other passengers, added the man, stood aloof to see the issue of the affair. We expected mischief; and some there was. One of the by-standers was the better for the fray; for he took up a silver-hilted sword, broken in two pieces, and rode off with it.

Sir Hargrave, said Sir Charles, smiling, might well give out that he was robbed; to lose such a prize as Miss Byron, and his sword besides.

I asked Sir Charles, if it were not adviseable to take measures with the villain?

He thought it best, he said, to take as little notice of the affair as possible, unless the aggressor stirred in it. Masquerades, added he, are not creditable places for young ladies to be known to be *insulted* at them. They are diversions that fall not in with the genius of the English commonalty. Scandal will have something to say from that circumstance, however causeless. But Miss Byron's story, told by herself, will enable you to resolve upon your future measures.

So, Sir Charles seems not to be a friend to masquerades.

I think, were I to live a hundred years, I never would go to another. Had it not been for Lady Betty—She has, indeed, too gay a turn for a woman of forty, and a mother of children. Miss Byron, I dare say, will be afraid of giving the lead to her for the future. But, excepting my wife and self, nobody in town has suffered more than Lady Betty on this occasion. Indeed she is, I must say, an obliging, well-meaning woman: and she also declares (so much has she been affected with Miss Byron's danger, of which she takes herself to be the innocent cause) that she will never again go to a masquerade.

I long to have Miss Byron's account of this horrid affair.—God grant, that it may not be such a one, as will lay us under a necessity—But as our cousin has a great notion of female delicacy—I know not what I would say—We must have patience a little while longer.

Miss Grandison's eyes shone with pleasure all the time her brother was giving his relation.

I can only say, brother, said she, when he had done, that you have rescued an angel of a woman; and you have made me as happy by it, as yourself.

I have a generous sister, Mr. Reeves, said Sir Charles.

Till I knew my brother, Mr. Reeves, as I now know him, I was an inconsiderate, unreflecting girl. Good and evil, which immediately affected not myself, were almost alike indifferent to me. But he has awakened in me a capacity to enjoy the true pleasure that arises from a benevolent action.

Depreciate not, my Charlotte, your own worth. Absence, Mr. Reeves, endears. I have been long abroad: not much above a year returned! But when you know us better, you will find I have a partial sister.

Mr. Reeves will not then think me so. But I will go and see how my fair patient does.

She went accordingly to my cousin.

O Sir Charles, said I, what an admirable woman is Miss Grandison!

My sister Charlotte, Mr. Reeves, is, indeed, an excellent woman. I think myself happy in her: but I tell her sometimes, that I have a still *more* excellent sister: and it is no small instance of Charlotte's greatness of mind, that she herself will allow me to say so.

Just then came in the ladies: the two charming creatures entered together, Miss Grandison support-

ing my trembling cousin: but she had first acquainted her, that she would find Sir Charles in *her* dressing-room.

She looked indeed lovely, though wan, at her first entrance; but a fine glow overspread her cheeks, at the sight of her deliverer.

Sir Charles approached her, with an air of calmness and serenity, for fear of giving her emotion. She cast her eyes upon him, with a look of the most respectful gratitude.

I will not oppress my fair guest with many words: but permit me to congratulate you, as I hope I may, on your recovered spirits—Allow me, madam—

And he took her almost-motionless hand, and conducted her to an easy chair that had been set for her. She sat down, and would have said something; but only bowed to Sir Charles, to Miss Grandison, and me; and reclined her head against the cheek of the chair.

Miss Grandison held her salts to her.

She took them into her own hands, and smelling to them, raised her head a little: Forgive me, madam. Pardon me, Sir!—O my cousin, to me—How can I—So oppressed with obligations!—Such goodness!—No words!—My gratitude!—My full heart!—

And then she again reclined her head, as giving up hopelessly the effort she made to express her gratitude.

You must not, madam, said Sir Charles, sitting down by her, over-rate a common benefit.—Dear Miss Byron (permit me to address myself to you, as of long acquaintance) by what Mr. Reeves has told my sister, and both have told me, I must think yesterday one of the happiest days of my life. I am sorry that our acquaintance has begun so much at your cost: but you must let us turn this evil ap-

pearance into real good. I have two sisters: the world produces not more worthy women. Let me henceforth boast that I have three: and shall I not then have reason to rejoice in the event that has made so lovely an addition to my family?

Then taking her passive hand with the tenderness of a truly-affectionate brother, consoling a sister in calamity, and taking his sister's, and joining both; Shall I not, madam, present my Charlotte to a sister? And will you not permit me to claim as a brother under that relation? Miss Byron's christian name, Mr. Reeves?

Harriet, Sir.

My sister Harriet, receive and acknowledge your Charlotte. My Charlotte—

Miss Grandison arose, and saluted my cousin; who looked at Sir Charles with reverence, as well as gratitude; at Miss Grandison with delight; and at me with eyes lifted up: and, after a little struggle for speech; How shall I bear this goodness! said she—This, indeed, is bringing good out of evil! Did I not say, cousin, that I was fallen into the company of angels?

I was afraid she would have fainted.

We must endeavour, Mr. Reeves, said Sir Charles to me, to lessen the sense *our* Miss Byron has of her past danger, in order to bring down to reasonable limits, the notion she has of her obligation for a common relief.

Miss Grandison ordered a few drops on sugar—You must be orderly, my sister Harriet, said she. Am I not your elder sister? *My* elder sister makes me do what she pleases.

Oh! madam! said my cousin—

Call me not *madam*; call me *your Charlotte*. My brother has given me and himself a sister—Will you not own me?

How can a heart bowed down by obligation, and goodness never to be returned, rise to that lovely familiarity, by which the obligers so generously distinguish themselves? My lips and my heart, I will be so bold as to say, ever went together: but how —And yet so sweetly invited. My—my—my Charlotte (withdrawing her hand from Sir Charles, and clasping both her arms round Miss Grandison's neck, the two worthiest bosoms of the sex joining as one) take your Harriet, person and mind— May I be found worthy, on proof, of all this goodness!

* *

Lady Betty has just left us. I read to her what I have written since my visit to Colnebrook. She shall not, she says, recover her eyes for a week to come.

The women, Mr. Selby, are ever looking forward on certain occasions. Lady Betty and my wife extended their wishes so far, as that they might be able to call Miss Grandison and our Miss Byron sisters; but by a claim that should exclude Sir Charles as a brother to one of them.

Should Sir Charles—But no more on this subject —Yet one word more: When the ladies had mentioned it, I could not help thinking that this graceful and truly fine gentleman seems to be the only man, whom our cousin has yet seen, that would meet with no great difficulty from her on such an application.

But Sir Charles has a great estate, and still greater expectations from my Lord W. His sister says, he would break half a score hearts, were he to marry—So for that matter would our Miss Byron. But once more—Not another word, however, on this subject.

I staid to dine with this amiable brother and

sister. My cousin exerted herself to go down, and sat at table for one half-hour: but changing countenance, once or twice, as she sat, Miss Grandison would attend her up, and make her lie down. I took leave of her, at her quitting the table.

On Monday I hope to see her once more among us.

If our dear Miss Byron cannot write, you will perhaps have one letter more, my dear Mr. Selby, from

Your ever affectionate,
ARCHIBALD REEVES.

My servant is this moment returned with your letter. Indeed, my dear Mr. Selby, there are two or three passages in it, that would have cut me to the heart,* had not the dear creature been so happily restored to our hopes.

LETTER XXVIII.

MR. REEVES. IN CONTINUATION.

Monday night, February 20.

I WILL write one more letter, my dear Mr. Selby, and then I will give up my pen to our beloved cousin.

I got to Colnebrook by nine this morning. I had the pleasure to find our Miss Byron recovered beyond my hopes. She had a very good night on Saturday; and all Sunday, she said, was a cordial day to her from morning till night; and her night was quiet and happy.

Miss Grandison staid at home yesterday to keep my cousin company. Sir Charles passed the great-

* See Letter xxiv.

est part of the day in the library. The two ladies were hardly ever separated. My cousin expresses herself in raptures, whenever she speaks of this brother and sister. Miss Grandison, she says (and indeed every one must see it) is one of the frankest and most communicative of women. Sir Charles appears to be one of the most unreserved of men, as well as one of the most polite. He makes not his guests uneasy with his civilities: but you see freedom and ease in his whole deportment; and the stranger cannot doubt but Sir Charles will be equally pleased with freedom and ease, in return. I had an encouraging proof of the justness of this observation this morning from him, as we sat at breakfast. I had expressed myself, occasionally, in such a manner as shewed more respect than freedom: My dear Mr. Reeves, said he, kindred minds will be intimate at first sight. Receive me early into the list of your friends; I have already numbered you among mine. I should think amiss of myself, if so good a man as I am assured Mr. Reeves is, should, by his distance, shew a diffidence of me, that would not permit his mind to mingle with mine.

Miss Grandison, my cousin says, put her on relating to her, her whole history; and the histories of the several persons and families to whom she is related.

Miss Byron concluding, as well as I, that Sir Charles would rather take his place in the coach, than go on horseback to town; and being so happily recovered, as not to give us apprehension about her bearing tolerably the little journey; I kept my horse in our return, and Sir Charles went in the coach. This motion coming from Miss Byron, I raillied her upon it when I got her home: but she won't forgive me, if she knows that I told you whose the motion

was. And yet the dear creature's eyes sparkled with pleasure when she had carried her point.

I was at home near half an hour before the coach arrived; and was a welcome guest.

My dear Mrs. Reeves told me, she had expected our arrival before dinner, and hoped Sir Charles and his sister would dine with us. I hoped so too, I told her.

I found there Lady Betty and Miss Clements, a favourite of us all, both impatiently waiting to see my cousin.

Don't be jealous, Mr. Reeves, said my wife, if after what I have heard of Sir Charles Grandison, and what he has done for us, I run to him with open arms.

I give you leave, my dear, to love him, replied I; and to express your love in what manner you please.

I have no doubt, said Lady Betty, that I shall break my heart, if Sir Charles takes not very particular notice of me.

He shall have my prayers, as well as my praises, said Miss Clements.

She is acquainted with the whole shocking affair.

When the coach stopt, and the bell rung, the servants contended who should first run to the door. I welcomed them at the coach. Sir Charles handed out Miss Byron, I Miss Grandison: Sally, said my cousin, to her raptured maid, take care of Mrs. Jenny.

Sir Charles was received, by Mrs. Reeves, as I expected. She was almost speechless with joy. He saluted her: but I think, as I tell her, the first motion was hers, He was then obliged to go round; and my cousin, I do assure you, looked as if she would not wish to have been neglected.

As soon as the ladies could speak, they poured out

their blessings and thanks to him, and to Miss Grandison; whom, with a most engaging air, he presented to each lady; and she, as engagingly, saluted her sister Harriet by that tender relation, and congratulated them, and Miss Byron, and herself upon it; kindly bespeaking a family relation for herself through her dear Miss Byron, were her words.

When we were seated, my wife and Lady Betty wanted to enter into the particulars of the happy deliverance, in praise of the deliverer; but Sir Charles interrupting them, My dear Mrs. Reeves, said he, you cannot be too careful of this jewel. Every thing may be trusted to her own discretion; but how can we well blame the man who would turn thief for so rich a treasure? I do assure you, my sister Harriet (Do you know, Mrs. Reeves, that I have found my third sister? Was she not stolen from us in her cradle?) that if Sir Hargrave will repent, I will forgive him for the sake of the temptation.

Mrs. Reeves was pleased with this address, and has talked of it since.

I never can forgive him, Sir, said Miss Byron, were it but—

That he has laid you under such an obligation, said Miss Grandison, patting her hand with her fan, as she sat over against her: But hush, child! You said that before!—And then turning to Mrs. Reeves, Has not our new-found sister a very proud heart, Mrs. Reeves?

And, dearest Miss Grandison, replied my smiling, delighted cousin, did you not ask that question before?

I did, child, I did; but not of Mrs. Reeves.—A compromise however—Do you talk no more of *obligation*, and I'll talk no more of *pride*.

Charlotte justly chides her Harriet, said Sir Charles. What must the man have been that had declined his

aid in a distress so alarming? Not one word more therefore upon this subject.

We were all disappointed, that this amiable brother and sister excused themselves from dining with us. All I mean of our own family; for Lady Betty and Miss Clements, not being able to stay, were glad *they* did not.

They took leave, amidst a thousand grateful blessings and acknowledgments; Miss Grandison promising to see her sister Harriet very soon again; and kindly renewing her wishes of intimacy.

When they went away, There goes your heart, Miss Byron, said Mrs. Reeves.

True, answered Miss Byron, if my heart have no place in it for any-thing but gratitude, as I believe it has not.

Miss Grandison, added she, is the most agreeable of women—

And Sir Charles, rejoined Mrs. Reeves, archly, is the most *dis*-agreeable of men.

Forbear, cousin, replied Miss Byron, and blushed.

Well, well, said Lady Betty, you need not, my dear, be ashamed, if it be so.

Indeed you need not, joined in Miss Clements: I never saw a finer man in my life. Such a lover, if one *might* have him—

If, if—replied Miss Byron—But till *if* is out of the question, should there not be such a thing as discretion, Miss Clements?

No doubt of it, returned that young lady; and if it *be* to be shewn by any woman on earth, where there is such a man as this in the question, and in such circumstances, it must be by Miss Byron.

Miss Byron was not so thoroughly recovered, but that her spirits began to flag. We made her retire, and, at her request, excused her coming down to dinner.

I told you I had accepted of the offer made by Lady Betty, when we were in dreadful uncertainty, that her steward should make further enquiries about the people at Paddington. Nothing worth mentioning has occurred from those enquiries; except confirming, that the widow and her daughters are not people of bad characters. In all likelihood they thought they should intitle themselves to the thanks of all Miss Byron's friends, when the marriage was completed with a man of Sir Hargrave's fortune.

The messenger that I sent to enquire after that Bagenhall's character, has informed us, that it is a very profligate one; and that he is an intimate of Sir Hargrave: but no more is necessary now, God be praised, to be said of him.

The vile wretch himself, I hear, keeps his room; and it is whispered, that he is more than half-crazed; insomuch that his very attendants are afraid to go near him. We know not the nature of his hurt; but hurt he is, though in a fair way of recovery. He threatens, it seems, destruction to Sir Charles, the moment he is able to go abroad. God preserve one of the worthiest and best of men!

Sir Hargrave has turned off all the servants, we are told, that attended him on his shocking, but happily-disappointed, enterprize.

Miss Byron intends to write to her Lucy by tomorrow's post (if she continue mending) an ample account of all that she suffered from the date of her last letter, to the hour of her happy deliverance. I am to give her minutes, to the best of my recollection, of what I have written to you; that so the account may be as complete as possible, and that she may write no more than is consistent with the series, which she is required to preserve. She begins this evening, she bids me tell you, that you may be as little a while in suspense about her as possible: but

if she cannot finish by to-morrow night, she will have an opportunity to dispatch her letter on Wednesday by a servant of Mr. Greville's, whom he left in town with some commissions, and who promises to call for any-thing we may have to send to Selby-house.

Sir Rowland—But let my cousin write to you upon that and other matters. She knows what to say on that subject better than I do.

Mean time I heartily congratulate every one of the dear family upon the return and safety of the darling of so many hearts; and remain, dear Mr. Selby,

Your most faithful and obedient servant,

ARCHIBALD REEVES.

LETTER XXIX.

MISS BYRON TO MISS SELBY.

Monday, February 20.

Is it again given me to write to you, my Lucy! and in you, to all my revered friends! To write with cheerfulness! To call upon you all to rejoice with me!—God be praised!

What dangers have I escaped! How have my head and my heart been affected! I dare not, as yet, think of the anguish you all endured for me.

With what wretched levity did I conclude my last letter! Giddy creature, that I was, vain and foolish!

But let me begin my sad story. Your impatience all this while must be too painful. Only let me premise, that gaily as I boasted, when I wrote to you so conceitedly, as it might seem, of my dress, and of conquests, and I know not what nonsense, I took no pleasure at the place, in the shoals of fools that swam after me. I despised myself and them. *Despised!* I was shocked at both.

Two Lucifers were among them; but the worst, the very worst Lucifer of all, appeared in a harlequin dress. He hopped and skipt, and played the fool about me; and at last told me, He knew Miss Byron; and that he was, as he called himself, the despised, the rejected, Sir Hargrave Pollexfen.

He behaved, however, with complaisance; and I had no apprehension of what I was to suffer from his villany.

Mr. Reeves has told you, that he saw me into the chair, provided for me by my vile new servant. O my Lucy! One branch of my vanity is entirely lopt off. I must pretend to some sort of skill in physiognomy! Never more will I, for this fellow's sake, presume to depend on my judgment of people's hearts framed from their countenances.

Mr. Reeves has told you every thing about the chair, and the chairmen. How can I describe the misgivings of my heart when I first began to suspect treachery! But when I undrew the curtains, and found myself farther deluded by another false heart, whose help I implored, and in the midst of fields, and soon after the lights put out, I pierced the night air with my screams, till I could scream no more. I was taken out in fits; and when I came a little to my senses, I found myself on a bed, three women about me; one at my head, holding a bottle to my nose, my nostrils sore with hartshorn, and a strong smell of burnt feathers; but no man near me.

Where am I? Who are you, madam? And who are you? Where am I? were the questions I first asked.

The women were a mother and two daughters. The mother answered, You are not in bad hands.

God grant you say truth! said I.

No harm is intended you; only to make you one

of the happiest of women. We would not be concerned in a bad action.

I hope not: I hope not: let me engage your pity, madam. You seem to be a mother: these young gentlewomen, I presume, are your daughters. Save me from ruin, I beseech you, madam: save me from ruin, as you would your daughters.

These young women *are* my daughters. They are sober and modest women. No ruin is intended you. One of the richest and noblest men in England is your admirer: he dies for you. He assures me, that he intends honourable marriage to you. You are not engaged, he says: and you must, and you shall, be his. You may save murder, madam, if you consent. He resolves to be the death of any lover whom you encourage.

This must be the vile contrivance of Sir Hargrave Pollexfen, immediately cried I out: Is it not? Is it not? Tell me; I *beg* of you to tell me.

I arose, and sat on the bed-side; and at that moment in came the vile, vile Sir Hargrave.

I screamed out. He threw himself at my feet. I reclined my head on the bosom of the elderly person, and by hartshorn and water they had much ado to keep me out of a fit. Had he not withdrawn; had he kept in my sight; I should certainly have fainted. But holding up my head, and seeing only the women, I revived: and began to pray, to beg, to offer rewards, if they would facilitate my escape, or procure my safety: but then came in again the hated man.

I beg of you, Miss Byron, said he, with an air of greater haughtiness than before, to make yourself easy, and hear what I have to say. It is in your own choice, in your own power, to be what you please, and to make *me* what you please. Do not therefore

needlessly terrify yourself. You see I am a determined man. Ladies, you may withdraw—

Not and leave me here!—And as they went out, I pushed by the mother, and between the daughters, and followed the foremost into the parlour; and then sunk down on my knees, wrapping my arms about her: O save me! save me! said I.

The vile wretch entered. I left her, and kneeled to him. I knew not what I did. I remember, I said, wringing my hands, If you have mercy; if you have compassion; let me now, now, I beseech you, Sir, this moment, experience your mercy.

He gave them some motion, I suppose, to withdraw (for by that time the widow and the other daughter were in the parlour); and they all three retired.

I have besought *you*, madam, and on my *knees* too, to shew *me* mercy; but none would you shew me, inexorable Miss Byron! Kneel, if you will; in your turn kneel, supplicate, pray; you cannot be more in earnest, than I was. Now are the tables turned.

Barbarous man! said I, rising from my knees. My spirit was raised; but it as instantly subsided. I beseech you, Sir Hargrave, in a quite frantic way, wringing my hands, and coming near him, and then running to the window, and then to the door (without meaning to go out at either, had they been open; for whither could I go?) and then again to him: Be not, I beseech you, Sir Hargrave, cruel to me. I never was cruel to any-body. You know I was civil to you; I was *very* civil—

Yes, yes, and very determined. You called me no names. I call you none, Miss Byron. You were very civil. Hitherto *I* have not been uncivil. But remember, madam—But, sweet and ever-adorable creature, and he clasped his arms about me, your very terror is beautiful! I can *enjoy* your terror, madam—And

the savage would have kissed me. My averted head frustrated his intention; and at his feet I besought him not to treat the poor creature, whom he had so vilely betrayed, with indignity.

I don't hit your fancy, madam!

Can you be a malicious man, Sir Hargrave?

You don't like my morals, madam!

And is this the way, Sir Hargrave, are these the means you take, to convince me that I ought to like them?

Well, madam, you shall prove the mercy in me, you would not shew. You shall see that I cannot be a malicious man; a revengeful man: and yet you have raised my pride. You shall find me a *moral* man.

Then, Sir Hargrave, will I bless you from the bottom of my heart!

But you know what will justify me, in every eye, for the steps I have taken. Be mine, madam. Be legally mine. I offer you my honest hand. Consent to be Lady Pollexfen—No punishment, I hope—Or, take the consequence.

What, Sir! justify by so poor, so *very* poor, a compliance, steps that you have so basely taken!—Take my life, Sir: but my hand and my heart are my own: they never shall be separated.

I arose from my knees, trembling, and threw myself upon the window-seat, and wept bitterly.

He came to me. I looked on this side, and on that, wishing to avoid him.

You cannot fly, madam. You are securely mine: and mine still more securely you shall be. Don't provoke me: don't make me desperate. By all that's good and holy—

He cast his eyes at my feet; then at my face; then threw himself at my feet, and embraced my knees with his odious arms.

I was terrified. I screamed. In ran one of the daughters—Good Sir! Pray Sir!—Did you not say you would be honourable?

Her mother followed her in—Sir, Sir! In my house—

Thank God, thought I, the people here are better than I had reason to apprehend they were. But, O my Lucy, they seemed to believe, that marriage would make amends for every outrage.

Here let me conclude this letter. I have a great deal more to say.

LETTER XXX.

MISS BYRON. IN CONTINUATION.

WHAT a plague, said the wretch to the women, do you come in for? I thought you knew your own sex better than to mind a woman's squalling. They are always ready, said the odious fellow, to put us in mind of the occasion we ought to give them for crying out. I have not offered the least rudeness—

I hope not, Sir. I hope my house—So sweet a creature—

Dear blessed, blessed woman (frantic with terror, and mingled joy, to find myself in better hands than I expected—Standing up, and then sitting down, I believe at every sentence) Protect me! Save me! Be my advocate! Indeed I have not deserved this treacherous treatment. Indeed I am a good sort of creature (I scarce knew what I said): all my friends love me: they will break their hearts, if any misfortune befal me: they are all good people: you would love them dearly if you knew them: Sir Hargrave may have better and richer wives than I: pray prevail

upon him to spare me to my friends, for *their* sake. I will forgive him for all he has done.

Nay, dear lady, if Sir Hargrave will make you his lawful and true wife, there can be no harm done, surely.

I will, I will, Mrs. Awberry, said he. I have promised, and I will perform. But if she stand in her own light—She expects nothing from my *morals*—If she stand in her own light; and looked fiercely—

God protect me! said I; God protect me!

The gentleman is without, Sir, said the woman. O how my heart, at that moment, seemed to be at my throat! What gentleman? thought I. Some one come to save me!—O no!—

And instantly entered the most horrible-looking clergyman that I ever beheld.

This, as near as I can recollect, is his description —A vast tall, big-boned, splay-footed man. A shabby gown; as shabby a wig; a huge red pimply face; and a nose that hid half of it, when he looked on one side, and he seldom looked fore-right when I saw him. He had a dog's-eared common-prayer book in his hand, which once had been gilt; opened, horrid sight! at the page of matrimony!

Yet I was so intent upon making a friend, when a man, a clergyman, appeared, that I heeded not, at his entrance, his frightful visage, as I did afterwards. I pushed by Sir Hargrave, turning him half round with my vehemence, and made Mrs. Awberry totter; and throwing myself at the clergyman's feet, Man of God, said I, my hands clasped, and held up; Man of God! Gentleman! Worthy man!—A good clergyman must be all this!—If ever you had children! save a poor creature! basely tricked away from all her friends! innocent! thinking no harm to anybody! I would not hurt a worm! I love every-body!

—Save me from violence! Give not your aid to sanctify a base action.

The man snuffled his answer through his nose. When he opened his pouched mouth, the tobacco hung about his great yellow teeth. He squinted upon me, and took my clasped hands, which were buried in his huge hand: Rise, madam! Kneel not to me! No harm is intended you. One question only: Who is that gentleman before me, in the silver-laced clothes? What is his name?—

He is Sir Hargrave Pollexfen, Sir: a wicked, a very wicked man, for all he looks so!

The vile wretch stood smiling, and enjoying my distress.

O madam! A very hon-our-able man! bowing, like a sycophant, to Sir Hargrave.

And who pray, madam, are you? What is your name?

Harriet Byron, Sir: a poor innocent creature (looking at my dress) though I make such a vile appearance—Good Sir, your pity! And I sunk down again at his feet.

Of Northamptonshire, madam? You are a single woman! Your uncle's name—

Is Selby, Sir. A very good man—I will reward you, Sir, as the most grateful heart—

All is fair! All is above-board: all is as it was represented. I am above bribes, madam. You will be the happiest of women before day-break—*Good people!*—The three women advanced.

Then I saw what an ugly wretch he was!

Sir Hargrave advanced. The two horrid creatures raised me between them. Sir Hargrave took my struggling hand; and then I saw another ill-looking man enter the room, who I suppose was to give me to the hated man.

Dearly beloved, began to read the snuffling monster—

O my Lucy! Does not your heart ake for your Harriet? Mine has seemed to turn over and over, round and round, I don't know how, at the recital.—It was ready to choak me at the time.

I must break off, for a few minutes.

LETTER XXXI.

MISS BYRON. IN CONTINUATION.

I WAS again like one frantic. Read no more! said I; and, in my frenzy, dashed the book out of the minister's hand, if a minister he was. I beg your pardon, Sir, said I; but you must read no further. I am basely betrayed hither. I cannot, I will not, be his.

Proceed, proceed, said Sir Hargrave, taking my hand by force; virago as she is, I will own her for my wife—Are *you* the *gentle*, the *civil*, Miss Byron, madam? looking sneeringly in my face.

Alas! my Lucy, I was no virago: I was in a perfect frenzy: but it was not an unhappy frenzy; since in all probability it kept me from falling into fits; and fits, the villain had said, should not save me.

Dearly beloved, again snuffled the wretch. O my Lucy! I shall never love these words. How may odious circumstances invert the force of the kindest words! Sir Hargrave still detained my struggling hand.

I stamped, and threw myself to the length of my arm, as he held my hand. No *dearly beloved's*, said I. I was just beside myself. What to say, what to do, I knew not.

The cruel wretch laughed at me; *No dearly beloved's!* repeated he, Very comical, 'faith, and laughed again: but proceed, proceed, doctor.

We are gathered together here in the sight of God, read he on.

This affected me still more. I adjure you, Sir, to the minister, by that God in whose sight you read we are gathered together, that you proceed no further. I adjure you, Sir Hargrave, in the same tremendous name, that you stop further proceedings. My life take: with all my heart, take my life: but my hand never, never, will I join with yours.

Proceed, doctor: doctor, pray proceed, said the vile Sir Hargrave. When the day dawns, she will be glad to own her marriage.

Proceed at your peril, Sir, said I. If you are really and truly a minister of that God whose presence what you have read supposes, do *not* proceed: do not make me desperate.—Madam, turning to the widow, you are a mother, and have given me room to hope you are a good woman; look upon me as if I were one of those daughters, whom I see before me: could you see one of them thus treated? Dear young women, turning to each, can you unconcernedly look on, and see a poor creature, tricked, betrayed, and thus violently, basely, treated, and not make my case your own? Speak for me! Plead for me! Be my advocates! Each of you, if ye are women, plead for me, as you would yourselves wish to be pleaded for, in my circumstances, and were thus barbarously used!

The young women wept. The mother was moved.

I wonder I kept my head. My brain was on fire.

Still, still, the unmoved Sir Hargrave cried out, Proceed, proceed, doctor: to-morrow before noon, all will be as it should be.

The man who stood aloof (the sliest, sodden-faced creature I ever saw) came nearer—To the question, doctor, and to my part, if you please!—Am not I her father?—To the question, doctor, if you please!

—The gentlewoman will prepare her for what is to follow.

O thou *man!* of heart the most obdurate and vile! And will ye, looking at every person, one hand held up (for still the vile man griped the other quite benumbed hand in his iron paw) and adjuring each, Will ye see this violence done to a poor young creature?—A soul, gentlewomen, you may have to answer for. I *can* die. Never, never, will I be his.

Let us women talk to the lady by ourselves, Sir Hargrave. Pray your honour, let us talk to her by ourselves.

Ay, ay, ay, said the parson, by all means: let the ladies talk to one another, Sir. She may be brought to consider.

He let go my hand. The widow took it. And was leading me out of the room—Not up-stairs, I hope, madam, said I.

You shan't then, said she. Come, Sally; come, Deb; let us women go out together.

They led me into a little room adjoining to the parlour: and then, my spirits subsiding, I thought I should have fainted away. I had more hartshorn and water poured down my throat.

When they had brought me a little to myself, they pleaded with me Sir Hargrave's great estate.—What are riches to me? Dirt, dirt, dirt! I hate them. They cannot purchase peace of mind: I want not riches.

They pleaded his honourable love—I my invincible aversion.

He was a handsome man—The most odious in my eyes of the human species. Never, never, should my consent be had to sanctify such a baseness.

My danger! And that they should not be able to save me from worse treatment—

How!—*Not able!*—Ladies, madam, is not this

your own house? Cannot you raise a neighbourhood? Have you no neighbours? A thousand pounds will I order to be paid into your hands for a present before the week is out; I pledge my honour for the payment; if you will but save me from a violence, that no worthy woman can see offered to a distressed young creature!—A thousand pounds!—Dear ladies! Only to save me, and see me safe to my friends!

The wretches in the next room, no doubt, heard all that passed. In at that moment came Sir Hargrave: Mrs. Awberry, said he, with a visage swelled with malice, young ladies, we keep you up; we disturb you. Pray retire to your own rest: leave me to talk with this perverse woman. She is mine.

Pray, Sir Hargrave, said Mrs. Awberry—

Leave her to *me*, I say:—Miss Byron, you *shall* be mine. Your Grevilles, madam, your Fenwicks, your Ormes, when they know the pains and the expence I have been at, to secure you, shall confess me their superior—Shall confess—

In wickedness, in cruelty, Sir, you are every man's superior.

You talk of cruelty, Miss Byron! triumphing over scores of prostrate lovers, madam! You remember your treatment of me, madam! kneeling, like an abject wretch, at your feet! Kneeling for pity! But no pity could touch your heart, madam:—Ungrateful, proud girl!—Yet am I not humbling you: take notice of that: I am not humbling you: I am proposing to exalt you, madam.

Vile, vile debasement, said I.

To exalt Miss Byron into Lady Pollexfen. And yet if you hold not out your hand to me—

He would have snatched my hand. I put it behind me. He would have snatched the other: I put that behind me too: and the vile wretch would then have kissed my undefended neck: but, with both my hands,

I pushed his audacious forehead from me. Charming creature! he called me, with passion in his look and accent: then, Cruel, proud, ungrateful: and swore by his Maker, that if I would not give my hand instantly, instead of *exalting* me, he would *humble* me. Ladies, pray withdraw, said he. Leave her to me: either Lady Pollexfen, or what I please; rearing himself proudly up! She may be happy if she will. Leave her to me.

Pray, Sir, said the youngest of the two daughters; and wept for me.

Greatly hurt, indeed, to be the wife of a man of my fortune and consequence! But leave her to me, I say.—I will soon bring down her pride: What a devil, am I to creep, beg, pray, entreat, and only for a *wife*? But, madam, said the insolent wretch, you will be mine upon easier terms, perhaps.

Madam, *pray* madam, said the widow to me, consider what you are about, and whom you refuse. Can you have a handsomer man? Can you have a man of a greater fortune? Sir Hargrave means nothing but what is honourable. You are in his power—

In *his* power, madam! returned I: I am in *yours*. You are mistress of this house. I claim the protection of it. Have you not neighbours? *Your* protection I put myself under. Then clasping my arms about her, Lock me from him till you can have help to secure to you the privilege of your own house; and deliver me safe to my friends, and I will share my fortune with your two daughters.

The wicked man took the mother and youngest daughter each by her hand, after he had disengaged the former from my clasping arms, and led them to the door. The elder followed them of her own accord. They none of them struggled against going. I begged, prayed, besought them not to go, and

when they did, would have thrust myself out with them: but the wretch, in shutting them out, squeezed me dreadfully, as I was half in, half out; and my nose gushed out with blood.

I screamed: he seemed frighted: but instantly recovering myself—So, so, you have done your worst! —You have killed me, I hope. I was out of breath; my stomach was very much pressed, and one of my arms was bruised. I have the marks still; for he clapt to the door with violence, not knowing, to do him justice, that I was so forward in the door-way.

I was in dreadful pain. I talked half wildly, I remember. I threw myself in a chair—So, so, you have killed me, I hope—Well, now I hope, now I hope, you are satisfied. Now may you moan over the poor creature you have destroyed: for he expressed great tenderness and consternation; and I, for my part, felt such pains in my bosom, that having never felt such before, I really thought I was bruised to death: repeating my foolish So, so—But I forgive you, said I—Only, Sir, call to the gentlewomen, Sir —Retire, Sir. Let me have my own sex only about me. My head swam: my eyes failed me; and I fainted quite away.

LETTER XXXII.

MISS BYRON. IN CONTINUATION.

I UNDERSTOOD afterwards that he was in the most dreadful consternation. He had fastened the door upon me and himself; and for a few moments was not enough present to himself to open it. Yet crying out upon his God to have mercy upon him, and running about the room, the women hastily rapped

at the door. Then he ran to it, opened it, cursed himself, and besought them to recover me, if possible.

They said I had death in my face: they lamented over me: my nose had done bleeding: but, careful of his own safety in the midst of his terror, he took my bloody handkerchief; if I did not recover, he said, *that* should not appear against him; and he hasted into the next room, and thrust it into the fire; by which were sitting, it seems, the minister and his helper, over some burnt brandy.

O gentlemen! cried the wretch, nothing can be done to-night. Take this; and gave them money. The lady is in a fit. I wish you well home.

The younger daughter reported this to me afterwards, and what follows: They had desired the maid, it seems, to bring them more firing, and a jug of ale; and they would sit in the chimney-corner, they said, till peep of day: but the same young woman who was taken off from her errand, to assist me, finding me, as they all thought, not likely to recover, ran in to them, and declared, that the lady was dead, certainly dead; and what, said she, will become of us all? This terrified the two men. They said, It was then time for them to be gone. Accordingly, taking each of them another dram, they snatched up their hats and sticks, and away they hurried; hoping, the doctor said, that, as they were innocent, and only meant to serve the gentleman, their names, whatever happened, would not be called in question.

When I came a little to myself, I found the three women only with me. I was in a cold sweat, all over shivering. There was no fire in that room: they led me into the parlour, which the two men had quitted; and sat me down in an elbow-chair; for I could hardly stand, or support myself; and chafed my temples with Hungary-water.

Wretched creatures, men of this cast, my Lucy, thus to sport with the healths and happiness of poor creatures whom they pretend to love! I am afraid I never shall be what I was. At times I am very sensible at my stomach of this violent squeeze.

The mother and elder sister left me soon after, and went to Sir Hargrave. I can only guess at the result of their deliberations by what followed.

The younger sister, with compassionate frankness, answered all my questions, and let me know all the above particulars. Yet she wondered that I could refuse so handsome and so rich a man as Sir Hargrave.

She boasted much of their reputation. Her mother would not do an ill thing, she said, for the world: and she had a brother who had a place in the Custom-house, and was as honest a man, though she said it, as any in it. She owned that she knew my vile servant; and praised his fidelity to the masters he had served, in such high terms, as if she thought all duties were comprised in that one, of obeying his principals, right or wrong. Mr. William, she said, was a pretty man, a genteel man, and she believed he was worth money; and she was sure would make an excellent husband. I soon found that the simple girl was in love with this vile, this specious fellow. She could not bear to hear me hint any-thing in his disfavour, as, by way of warning to her, I would have done. But she was sure Mr. William was a downright honest man; and that if he were guilty of any bad thing, it was by command of those to whom he owed duty: and *they* are to be answerable for that, you know, madam.

We were broke in upon, as I was intending to ask more questions (for I find this Wilson was the prime agent in all this mischief) when the elder

sister called out the younger: and instantly came in Sir Hargrave.

He took a chair, and sat down by me, one leg thrown over the knee of the other; his elbow upon that knee, and his hand supporting his bowed down head; biting his lips; looking at me, then from me, then at me again, five or six times, as in malice.

Ill-natured, spiteful, moody wretch! thought I (trembling at his strange silence, after such hurt as he had done me, and what I had endured, and still felt in my stomach and arm) what an odious creature thou art!

At last I broke silence. I thought I would be as mild as I could, and not provoke him to do me farther mischief. Well have you done, Sir Hargrave, (have you not?) to commit such a violence upon a poor young creature that never did nor thought you evil!

I paused. He was silent.

What distraction have you given to my poor cousin Reeves's! How my heart bleeds for them!

I stopt. He was still silent.

I hope, Sir, you are sorry for the mischief you have done me; and for the pain you have given to my friends!—I hope, Sir—

Cursed! said he.

I stopt, thinking he would go on: but he said no more; only changing his posture; and then resuming it.

These people, Sir, seem to be honest people. I hope you designed only to terrify me. Your bringing me into no worse company is an assurance to me that you meant better, than—

Devils all! interrupted he—

I thought he was going on; but he grinned, shook his head, and then again reclined it upon his hand.

I forgive you, Sir, the pain you have given me.—But my friends—As soon as day breaks (and I hope that is not far off) I will get the women to let my cousin Reeves—

Then up he started—Miss Byron, said he, you are a *woman;* a *true* woman—And held up his hand, clenched. I knew not what to think of his intention.

Miss Byron, proceeded he, after a pause, you are the most consummate hypocrite that I ever knew in my life: and yet I thought that the best of you all could fall into fits and swoonings whenever you pleased.

I was now silent. I trembled.

Damn'd fool! ass! blockhead! *woman's* fool!—I ought to be d—n'd for my credulous folly!—I tell you, Miss Byron—Then he looked at me as if he were crazy; and walked two or three times about the room.

To be dying one half-hour, and the next to look so provoking—

I was still silent.

I could *curse* myself for sending away the parson. I thought I had known something of women's tricks—But yet your arts, your hypocrisy, shall not serve you, madam. What I failed in *here*, shall be done *elsewhere*. By the great God of heaven, it shall.

I wept. I *could not* then speak.

Can't you go into fits again? Can't you? said the barbarian; with an air of a piece with his words; and using other words of the lowest reproach.

God deliver me, prayed I to myself, from the hands of this madman!

I arose, and as the candle stood near the glass, I saw in it my vile figure, in this abominable habit, to which, till then, I had paid little attention. O how I scorned myself!

Pray, Sir Hargrave, said I, let me *beg* that you will not terrify me further. I will forgive you for all you have hitherto done, and place it to my own account, as a proper punishment for consenting to be thus marked for a vain and foolish creature. Your abuse, Sir, give me leave to say, is low and unmanly: but in the light of a punishment I will own it to be all deserved: and let here my punishment end, and I will thank you; and forgive you with my whole heart.

Your fate is *determined*, Miss Byron.

Just then came in a servant-maid with a capuchin, who whispered something to him: to which he answered, *That's well*—

He took the capuchin; the maid withdrew; and approached me with it. I started, trembled, and was ready to faint. I caught hold of the back of the elbow-chair.

Your fate is determined, madam, repeated the savage—Here, put this on—Now fall into fits again —Put this on!

Pray, Sir Hargrave—

And pray, Miss Byron: what has not been completed here, shall be completed in a safer place; and that in my own way—Put this on, I tell you. Your compliance may yet befriend you.

Where are the gentlewomen? Where are—

Gone to rest, madam—John, Frank, called he out.

In came two men-servants.

Pray, Sir Hargrave—Lord protect me—Pray, Sir Hargrave—Where are the gentlewomen?—Lord protect me!

Then running to the door, against which one of the men stood—Man, stand out of the way, said I. But he did not: he only bowed.

I cried out, Mrs. ——I forget your name: Miss ——

And t'other Miss —— I forget your names —— If you are good creatures, as I hoped you were—

I called as loud as my fears would let me.

At last came in the elder sister—O madam! good young gentlewoman! I am glad you are come, said I.

And so am I, said the wicked man—Pray, Miss Sally, put on this lady's capuchin.

Lord bless me! for why? for what? I have no capuchin!

I would not permit her to put it on, as she would have done.

The savage then wrapt his arms about mine, and made me so very sensible, by his force, of the pain I had had by the squeeze of the door, that I could not help crying out. The young woman put on the capuchin, whether I would or not.

Now, Miss Byron, said he, make yourself easy; or command a fit, it is all one: my end will be better served by the latter—Miss Sally, give orders.

She ran out with the candle. Frank, give me the cloak, said Sir Hargrave.

The fellow had a red cloak on his arm. His barbarous master took it from him. To your posts, said he.

The two men withdrew in haste. Now, my dearest life, said he, with an air of insult, as I thought, you command your fate, if you are easy.

He threw the cloak about me.

I begged, prayed, would have kneeled to him; but all was in vain: the tyger-hearted man, as Mr. Greville had truly called him, muffled me up in it, and by force carried me through a long entry to the fore-door. There was ready a chariot-and-six; and that Sally was at the door with a lighted candle.

I called out to her. I called out for her mother; for the other sister. I besought him to let me say but six words to the widow.

But no widow was to appear; no younger sister: she was perhaps more tender-hearted than the elder: and in spite of all my struggles, prayers, resistance, he lifted me into the chariot.

Men on horseback were about it. I thought *that* Wilson was one of them; and so it proved. Sir Hargrave said to that fellow, You know what tale to tell, if you meet with impertinents. And in he came himself.

I screamed. Scream on, my dear, upbraidingly said he; and barbarously mocked me, imitating, low wretch! the bleating of a sheep [Could you not have killed him for this, my Lucy?] Then rearing himself up, Now am I lord of Miss Byron! exulted he.

Still I screamed for help; and he put his hand before my mouth, though vowing honour and such sort of stuff; and, with his unmanly roughness, made me bite my lip. And away lashed the coachman with your poor Harriet.

LETTER XXXIII.

MISS BYRON. IN CONTINUATION.

As the chariot drove by houses, I cried out for help once or twice, at setting out. But under pretence of preventing my taking cold, he tied a handkerchief over my face, head, and mouth, having first muffled me up in the cloak; pressing against my arm with his whole weight, so that I had not my hands at liberty. And when he had done, he seized them, and held them both in his left-hand, while his right-arm thrown round me, kept me fast on the seat; and except that now and then my struggling head gave me a little opening, I was blinded.

But at one place on the road, just after I had screamed, and made another effort to get my hands free, I heard voices; and immediately the chariot stopt. Then how my heart was filled with hope! But, alas! it was momentary. I heard one of his men say (that Wilson I believe) The best of husbands, I assure you, Sir; and she is the worst of wives.

I screamed again. Ay, scream and be d—n'd, I heard said in a stranger's voice, if that be the case. Poor gentleman! I pity him with all my heart. And immediately the coachman drove on again.

The vile wretch laughed; That's *you*, my dear; and hugged me round. *You* are the d—n'd wife. And again he laughed: By my soul, I am a charming contriver! Greville, Fenwick, Orme, where are you now?—By my soul, this will be a pretty story to tell when all your fears are over, my Byron!

I was ready to faint several times. I begged for air: and when we were in an open road, and I suppose there was nobody in sight, he vouchsafed to pull down the blinding handkerchief, but kept it over my mouth; so that, except now-and-then that I struggled it aside with my head (and my neck is still, my dear, very stiff with my efforts to free my face) I could only make a murmuring kind of noise.

The curtain of the fore-glass was pulled down, and generally the canvas on both sides drawn up. But I was sure to be made acquainted when we came near houses, by his care again to blind and stifle me up.

A little before we were met by my deliverer, I had, by getting one hand free, unmuffled myself so far as to see (as I had guessed once or twice before by the stone pavements) that we were going through a town; and then I again vehemently screamed. But he had the cruelty to thrust a handkerchief

into my mouth, so that I was almost strangled; and my mouth was hurt, and is still sore, with that and his former violence of the like nature.

Indeed, he now-and-then made apologies for the cruelty, to which, he said, he was compelled, by my invincible obstinacy, to have recourse. I was sorely hurt, he said, to be the wife of a man of his consideration! But I *should* be that, or worse. He was *in for it* (he said more than once) and *must* proceed. I might see that all my resistance was in vain. He had me in his net: and, d—n him, if he were not revenged for all the trouble I had given him. You keep no terms with me, my Byron, said he once; and d—n me, if I keep any with you!

I doubted not his malice: his love had no tenderness in it: but how could I think of being consenting, as I may say, to such barbarous usage, and by a man so truly odious to me? What a slave had I been in spirit, could I have qualified on such villanous treatment as I had met with! or had I been able to desert myself!

At one place the chariot drove out of the road, over rough ways, and little hillocks, as I thought, by its rocking; and then, it stopping, he let go my hands, and endeavoured to sooth me. He begged I would be pacified, and offered, if I would forbear crying out for help, to leave my eyes unmuffled all the rest of the way. But I would not, I told him, give such a sanction to his barbarous violence.

On the chariot's stopping, one of his men came up, and put an handkerchief into his master's hands, in which were some cakes and sweet-meats; and gave him also a bottle of sack, with a glass. Sir Hargrave was very urgent with me to take some of the sweet-meats, and to drink a glass of the wine: but I had neither stomach nor will to touch either.

He eat himself very cordially. God forgive me, I wished in my heart, there were pins and needles in every bit he put into his mouth.

He drank two glasses of the wine. Again he urged me. I said, I hoped I had eat and drank my last.

You have no dependence upon my honour, madam, said the villain; so cannot be disappointed much, do what I will. Ungrateful, proud, vain, obstinate, he called me.

What signifies, said he, shewing politeness to a woman who has shewn none to me, though she was civil to every other man? Ha, ha, ha, hah! What, my sweet Byron, I don't hit your *fancy!—You don't like my morals!* laughing again. My lovely fly, said the insulting wretch, hugging me round in the cloak, how prettily have I wrapt you about in my web!

Such a provoking low wretch!—I struggled to free myself; and unhooked the curtain of the fore-glass: but he wrapt me about the closer, and said he would give me his garter for my girdle, if I would not sit still, and be orderly. Ah, my charming Byron! said he, your opportunity is over—All your struggles will not *avail* you—Will not *avail* you. That's a word of your own, you know. I will, however, forgive you, if you promise to love me now. But if you stay till I get you to the allotted place; then, madam, take what follows.

I saw that I was upon a large, wild, heath-like place, between two roads, as it seemed. I asked nothing about my journey's end. All I had to hope for as to an escape (though then I began to despair of it) was upon the road, or in some town. My journey's end, I knew, must be the beginning of new trials; for I was resolved to suffer death rather than to marry him. What I now was most

apprehensive about, was, of falling into fits; and I answered to his barbarous insults as little as possible, that I might not be provoked beyond the little strength I had left me.

Three or four times he offered to kiss me; and cursed my pride for resisting him; making him clasp a cloud, was his speech (aiming at wit) instead of his Juno; calling the cloak a cloud.

And now, my dear Byron, said he, if you will not come to a compromise with me, I must dress you again for the journey. We will stop at a town a little further (beckoning to one of his men, and, on his approaching, whispering to him, his whole body out of the chariot) and there you shall alight; and a very worthy woman, to whom I shall introduce you, will persuade you, perhaps, to take refreshment, though I cannot.

You are a very barbarous man, Sir Hargrave. I have the misfortune to be in your power. You may dearly repent the usage I have already received from you. You have made my life of no estimation with me. I will not contend.

And tears ran down my cheeks. Indeed, I thought my heart was broke.

He wrapt me up close, and tied the handkerchief about my mouth and head. I was quite passive.

The chariot had not many minutes got into the great road again, over the like rough and sometimes plashy ground, when it stopt on a dispute between the coachman, and the coachman of another chariot-and-six, as it proved.

Sir Hargrave had but just drawn my handkerchief closer to my eyes, when this happened. Hinder not my tears from flowing, said I; struggling to keep my eyes free, the cloak enough muffling me, and the handkerchief being over my mouth; so that my voice could be but just heard by him, as I imagine.

He looked out of his chariot, to see the occasion of this stop; and then I found means to disengage one hand.

I heard a gentleman's voice directing his own coachman to give way.

I then pushed up the handkerchief with my disengaged hand, from my mouth, and pulled it down from over my eyes, and cried out for help; Help, for God's sake!

A man's voice (it was my deliverer's, as it happily proved) bid Sir Hargrave's coachman proceed at his peril.

Sir Hargrave, with terrible oaths and curses, ordered him to proceed, and to drive through all opposition.

The gentleman called Sir Hargrave by his name; and charged him with being upon a bad design.

The vile wretch said, he had only secured a runaway wife, eloped to, and intending to elope from, a masquerade, to her adulterer [Horrid!]: he put aside the cloak, and appealed to my dress.

I cried out, No, no, no, five or six times repeated; but could say no more at that instant, holding up then both my disengaged hands for protection.

The wicked man endeavoured to muffle me up again, and to force the handkerchief, which I had then got under my chin, over my mouth; and brutally cursed me.

The gentleman would not be satisfied with Sir Hargrave's story. He would speak to *me*. Sir Hargrave called him impertinent, and other names; and asked, Who the devil he was? with rage and contempt.—The gentleman, however, asked me, and with an air that promised deliverance, if I were Sir Hargrave's wife.

No, no, no, no—I could only say.

For my own part, I could have no scruple, dis-

tressed as I was, and made desperate, to throw myself into the protection, and even into the arms, of my deliverer; though a very fine young gentleman. It would have been *very* hard, had I fallen from bad to bad; had the sacred name of protector been abused by *another* Sir Hargrave, who would have had the *additional* crime of betraying a confidence to answer for. But, however this had proved, an escape from the present evil was all I had in my head at the time.

But you may better conceive, than I can express, the terror I was in, when Sir Hargrave drew his sword, and pushed at the gentleman with such words as denoted (for I could not look that way) he had done him mischief. But when I found my oppressor, my low-meaning, and soon after low-laid oppressor, pulled out of the chariot, by the brave, the gallant man (which was done with such force, as made the chariot rock) and my protector safe; I was as near fainting with joy, as before I had been with terror. I had shaken off the cloak, and untied the handkerchief.

He carried me in his arms (I could not walk) to his own chariot.

I heard Sir Hargrave curse, swear, and threaten. I was glad, however, he was not dead.

Mind him not, madam, fear him not, said Sir Charles Grandison, [You know his noble name, my Lucy]: Coachman, drive not over your master: take care of your master; or some such words he said, as he lifted me into his own chariot. He came not in, but shut the chariot-door, as soon as he had seated me.

He just surveyed, as it were, the spot, and bid a servant let Sir Hargrave know who he was; and then came back to me.

Partly through terror, partly through weakness,

I had sunk to the bottom of the chariot. He opened the door, entered, and, with all the tenderness of a brother, soothed me, and lifted me on the seat once more. He ordered his coachman to drive back to Colnebrook. In accents of kindness, he told me, that he had there at present the most virtuous and prudent of sisters, to whose care he would commit me, and then proceed on his journey to town.

How irresistibly welcome to me was his supporting arm, thrown round me, as we *flew* back, compared to that of the vile Sir Hargrave!

Mr. Reeves has given you an account from the angelic sister—O my Lucy, they are a pair of angels!

I have written a long, long letter, or rather five letters in one, of my distresses, of my deliverance: and, when my heart is stronger, I will say more of the persons, as well as minds, of this excellent brother and his sister.

But what shall I do with my gratitude? O my dear, I am *overwhelmed* with my gratitude: I can only express it in silence before them. Every look, if it be honest to my heart, however, tells it: reverence mingles with my gratitude—Yet there is so much ease, so much sweetness, in the behaviour of both—O my Lucy! Did I not find that my veneration of both is equal; did I not, on examination, find, that the amiable sister is as dear to me, from her experienced tenderness, as her brother from his remembered bravery (which must needs mingle awe with my esteem); in short, that I love the sister, and revere the brother; I should be afraid of my gratitude.

I have over-written myself. I am tired. O my grandmamma, you have never yet, while I have been in London, sent me your ever valued blessing under your own hand: yet, I am sure I had it; and

your blessings, my dear uncle and aunt Selby; and your prayers, my Lucy, my Nancy, and all my loves; else my deliverance had not perhaps followed my presumptuous folly, in going dressed out, like the fantastic wretch I appeared to be, at a vile, a foolish, masquerade.—How often, throughout the several stages of my distress, and even in my deliverance, did I turn my eye *to* myself, and *from* myself, with the disgust that made a part, and that not a light one, of my punishment!

And so much, my Lucy, for masquerades, and masquerade dresses, for ever!

Pray let not any-body unnecessarily be acquainted with this shocking affair: particularly neither Mr. Greville nor Mr. Fenwick. It is very probable, that they (especially Mr. Greville) would be for challenging Sir Hargrave, were it only on a supposition that it would give him an interest in me in the *eye of the world*. You know that Mr. Greville watches for all opportunities to give himself consequence with me.

Were any farther mischief to happen to any-body, I should be grieved beyond measure. Hitherto I have reason to think, that a transaction so shocking is not very unhappily concluded. May the vile man sit himself down satisfied, and I shall be willing to do so too; provided I never more behold his face.

* *

Mr. Reeves will send you, with the above packet, a letter from Sir Charles Grandison, inclosing one from that vile Wilson. I can write no more just now, and they will sufficiently explain themselves.

Adieu, my dearest Lucy. I need not say how much I am, and ever will be,

Your faithful and affectionate

HARRIET BYRON.

LETTER XXXIV.

SIR CHA. GRANDISON TO ARCH. REEVES, ESQ.

DEAR SIR, Canterbury, February 22.

THE inclosed long letter is just now brought to me. I pretend not to judge of the writer's penitence. Yet his confessions seem ingenuous; and he was not under any obligation to put them on paper.

As I presume that you will not think it adviseable to make the *ineffectual* attempt upon Miss Byron public by a prosecution, perhaps your condescending to let the man's sister know, that her brother, if in earnest, may securely pursue the honest purposes he mentions, may save the poor wretch from taking such courses as might be fatal, not only to himself, but to innocent persons who otherwise may suffer by his being made desperate.

The man, as you will see by his letter, if you had not a still *stronger* proof, has abilities to do mischief. He has been in bad hands, as he tells us, from his youth upwards, or he might have been an useful member of society. He is a young man; and if yet he could be made *so*, his reformation will take from the number of the profligate, and add to that of the hopeful; and who knows how wide the circle of his acquaintance is, and how many of them may be influenced by his example either way? If he marry the not-dishonest young woman, to whom he seems to be contracted, may not your lenity be a means of securing a whole future family on the side of moral honesty?

His crime, as the attempt was frustrated, is not capital: and, not to mention the service of such an evidence as this, should Sir Hargrave seek for a legal redress, as he sometimes weakly threatens, my hope

makes me see a further good that may be brought about by this man's reformation: wicked masters cannot execute their base views upon the *persons* of the innocent, without the assistance of wicked servants. What a nest of vipers may be crushed at once, or, at least, rendered unhurtful, by depriving the three monsters he names of the aid of such an agent? Men who want to save appearances, and have estates to forfeit, will sometimes be honest of necessity, rather than put themselves into the power of *untried* villains.

You will be so good as to make my compliments to your lady, and to *our* lovely ward. You see, Sir, that I join myself with you in the honour of that agreeable relation.

I hope the dear lady has perfectly recovered her health and spirits. I am, good Mr. Reeves,

Your most faithful and obedient servant,

CHARLES GRANDISON.

LETTER XXXV.

TO SIR CHARLES GRANDISON, BART.

Saturday, February 18.

In what an odious light must that wretch appear before the worthiest of men, who cannot but abhor himself.

I am the unhappy man who was hired into the service of the best of young ladies: whom I was the means of betraying into the power of Sir Hargrave Pollexfen, from the ball in the Hay-market on Thursday night last.

Your honour has made yourself an *interest* in Miss Byron's fate, as I may say, by your powerful protec-

tion. Pardon me if I give you some account of myself, and of transactions which perhaps will otherwise never be known; and this in justice to all round.

My parentage was honest. My education was above my parentage. I set out with good principles: but I fell into a bad service. I was young, and of a good natural disposition; but had not virtue enough to resist a temptation: I could not say No, to an unlawful thing, when my principals commanded my assent.

I was, at *first* setting out, by favour of friends, taken as clerk to a merchant. In process of time I transacted his business at the Custom-house. He taught me to make light of oaths of office; and this by degrees made me think light of all moral obligations, and laid the foundation of my ruin.

My master's name was Bagenhall. He died; and I was to seek employ. His brother succeeded to his fortune, which was very large: he was brought up to no business: he was a gentleman: his seat is near Reading. I was recommended by him to the service of a gentleman who was nominated to go abroad on a foreign embassy. I will name his name, lest your honour would imagine I have any design to evade the strictest truth; Sir Christopher Lucas; I was to be this gentleman's master of the horse abroad.

The first service my new master employed me in, was to try to get for him the pretty daughter of an honest farmer.

I had been out of place for a twelvemonth. Had I had twenty shillings aforehand in the world, I would, I think, have said No. Nevertheless I consulted, in confidence, my late master's brother upon it. The advice he gave me, was, not to boggle at it: But if, he said, I could manage the matter so, as to cheat Sir Christopher, and get the girl for him, and keep the secret, he would give me 50l. I abhorred

the double treachery of young Mr. Bagenhall: but undertook to serve Sir Christopher; and carried on a treaty with the farmer for his daughter; as if she were to be the wife of Sir Christopher; but not to be owned till he returned from abroad; no, not even if she should prove with child.

I found, in the course of my visits at the farmer's, so much honesty both in father and mother, and so much innocence in the daughter, that my heart relented; and I took an opportunity to reveal Sir Christopher's base design to them; for the girl was designed to be ruined the very first moment that Sir Christopher could be alone with her. Your honour may believe, that I injoined all three strict secrecy.

Nevertheless this contriving devil of a master found a way to get the young woman by other means; and, in amorous dalliance, she told him to whom he was obliged for not succeeding before.

In rage he turned me out of his service, in the most disgraceful manner; but without giving any other reasons, than that he knew me to be a villain; and that I knew myself to be one; nor would he give me a character: so I was quite reduced; and but for the kindness of a sister, who keeps an inn in Smithfield, I should have starved, or been obliged to do worse.

I should have told your honour, that the poor farmer and his wife both died of grief in half a year. An honest young man, who dearly loved the young woman, was found drowned soon after: it is feared he was his own executioner. Sir Christopher went not on his embassy. His preparations for it, and his expensive way of life, before and after, reduced him: and he has been long a beggar, as I may say. The poor young woman is now, if living, on the town. I saw her about half a year ago in St. Martin's Round-house, taken up as a common prostitute, and charged

with picking a pocket. She was a pretty creature, and had a very pious turn, when I knew her first. Her father had gone beyond himself in her education: and this was the fruit. What has such a man as Sir Christopher to answer for!—But it is come home to him. I rejoice that this wickedness was not added to my score.

But heavy scenes I had enough afterwards. Being utterly destitute, except what my sister did for me, and not enduring to be a burden to her, I threw myself upon my master Bagenhall. He employed me in mean offices, till his pander died (he is a very profligate man, Sir!): and then he *promoted* me to a *still meaner*.

In this way, I grew a shameless contriver. He introduced me to Sir Hargrave Pollexfen, and to Mr. Merceda, a Portuguese Jew. In the service of these three masters, good heaven forgive me! what villanies was I not the means of perpetrating! Yet I never was so hardened, but I had temporary remorses. But these three gentlemen would never let me rest from wickedness: yet they kept me poor and necessitous; as the only means to keep me what they called *honest*; for they had often reason to think, that had I had any other means of subsistence, I would have been *really* honest.

I was now Mr. Bagenhall's constant servant. Sir Hargrave and Mr. Merceda used to borrow me: but I must say Sir Hargrave is an innocent man to the other two. They caressed me, I speak it to my shame, as a man fit for their turn. I had contrivance; temper: I knew something of every-body. But my sister knows my frequent compunctions; and that I hated the vile course I was in. She used to lecture me enough. She is a good woman.

Will your honour have patience with me a little longer?

Sir Hargrave on the seventh of this month came to my master Bagenhall at Reading, with whom he had double business: one was to take a bond and judgment of him (Sir Hargrave is no better than an usurer): Mr. Bagenhall has lived a most extravagant life: the other was to borrow me. Mr. Merceda had a scheme on foot at the same time, which he was earnest to engage me in; but it was too shocking; and Mr. Bagenhall came into Sir Hargrave's.

Sir Hargrave told them, he designed nothing *more* than a *violation*, if he could get my assistance, of the most beautiful woman in the world. And, Sir, to see the villany of the other two; they both, unknown to each other, made proposals to me, to trick Sir Hargave, and to get the lady, each for himself.

But to *me*, Sir Hargrave swore, that he was fully resolved to leave this wicked course of life. Bagenhall and Merceda, he said, were devils; and he would marry, and have no more to say to them. All that was in his view was honest marriage. He said he had never been in the lady's company but once, and that was the day before at Lady Betty Williams's. He said he went thither, knowing she was to be there: for having for some time had it in his head to marry, this was the lady he had pitched upon in his mind, from the character he had of her from every mouth at the Northampton races.

Now, said he, I shall have some difficulty to obtain her, notwithstanding my fortune is so great; for every one who sees her is in love with her; and he named several gentlemen who laid close siege to her.

She brought a servant up with her, said he, who pines after the country, and is actually gone, or soon will. Her cousin enquires of every one after a proper servant for her. You, Wilson, said he, are handsome and genteel: he was pleased to say so. You

have a modest humble look: you know all the duties of a servant: get yourself entertained, and your fortune is made for life, if by your means I obtain the lady. I have already tendered myself, said he. Perhaps she will have me in a few days. I don't expect to be denied, if she be disengaged, as it is said she is. If you can get into her service, you will find out every-thing. This is all that is to be done: but you must never mention my name, nor ever know any-thing of me, as I go and come.

Sir Hargrave declared, that his heart was *burnt up* with the love of the lady: and if he succeeded (as he had little doubt, even without my help, had I been actually in Merceda's service) you will, said he, as my lady's servant, be mine of course; you shall never wear a livery; and you shall be my gentleman, till I can get a place for you in the customs. This, may it please your honour, he knew I had long aimed at; and it had been often promised by himself, and my other two masters: and was their first promise when they wanted to engage me in any of their schemes, though they never thought more of it when the service was over. If I got but myself engaged, I was, on the day I entered into my lady's service, to have as an earnest ten guineas.

Encouraged by such promises (and the project being an honester one than ever Sir Hargrave, or either of the other two, had sought to engage me in) I offered my service to my lady; and, on Mr. Bagenhall's writing a good character of me, was accepted.

I could have been happy in the service of this lady, all the days of my life. She is all goodness: all the servants, every-body, gentle and simple, adored her: but she, unexpectedly, refusing to have Sir Hargrave, and he being afraid that one of her three or four lovers would *cut him out*, he resolved

to take more violent measures than he had at first intended.

If any man was ever mad in love, it was Sir Hargrave. But then he was as mad with anger to be refused. Sir Hargrave was ever thought to be one of the proudest men in England: and he complained that my lady used him worse than she did any-body else. But it was not *her* way to use any-body ill, I saw that.

Nevertheless he was resolved to strike a *bold stroke for a wife*, as were his words from the title of a play: and between us we settled the matter in one night: for I had found means to get out unknown to the family.

It will be trespassing too much upon your honour's patience, to be very particular in our contrivances, I will be as brief as possible.

My lady was to go to a masquerade. I got into the knowledge of every-thing about it. The maids were as full of the matter as their master and mistresses.

It was agreed to make the chairmen fuddled. Two of *Mr. Merceda's footmen* were to undertake the task. Brandy was put into their liquor, to hasten them.

They were soon overcome. The weather was cold: they drank briskly, and were laid up safe. I then hired two chance chairmen, and gave them orders, as had been contrived.

I had twenty guineas given me in hand for my encouragement; in which were included the promised ten.

I had, when I was my first master Bagenhall's clerk, made acquaintance with several clerks of the Custom-house, particularly with one Awberry, a sober modest man; who has two sisters; to one of whom I am contracted, and always, for two years past, intended to make my wife, as soon as I should

be in any way to maintain her. The mother is a widow. All of them are very honest people.

Mr. Awberry the brother being assured by me (and I was well assured of it myself, and had no doubt about it) that marriage was intended; and knowing Sir Hargrave's great estate (and having indeed seen Sir Hargrave on the occasion, and received his protestations of honour) engaged his mother and sisters in it; and the result, as to them and me, was, that I was to receive, as soon as the knot was tied, a hundred guineas besides the twenty; and moreover an absolute promise of a place; and twenty pounds a year till I got it; and then my marriage with young Mrs. Awberry was to follow.

The widow has an annuity of thirty pounds, which, with her son's salary, keeps them above want.

She lives at Paddington. There is a back door and garden, as it happens, convenient to bring any-body in, or carry any-body out, secretly; and hither it was resolved, if possible, that the lady should be brought, and a Fleet parson and his clerk ready stationed, to perform the ceremony; and then all that the bridegroom wished was to follow of course.

Sir Hargrave doubted not (though he was fruitful in contrivances, and put many others in practice) but he should be detected if he carried the lady to his own house. And as he was afraid that the chairmen (notwithstanding several other artful contrivances) would be able to find out the place they carried her to, he had ordered his chariot-and-six to be at the widow Awberry's by six in the morning, with three servants on horseback, armed, and a horse and pistols besides. After marriage and consummation, he was resolved to go to his house on the forest, but not to stay there; but to go to Mr. Merceda's house near Newbury, where he doubted not but he should be secret till he thought fit to pro-

duce the lady as Lady Pollexfen: and often, very often, did he triumph on the victory he should obtain over her other lovers, and over her own proud heart, as he would have it to be.

The parson, Sir, came: the clerk was there: but what with fits, prayers, tears, and one thing or other (at one time the lady being thought irrecoverable, having received some unintended hurt in her struggling to get out of a door, as I heard it was) Sir Hargrave in terror dismissed the parson; and resolved to carry the lady (who by that time was recovered) in the chariot to his seat at Windsor; and then, staying there only to marry, go to Newbury: and from thence break out by degrees, as the matter should be taken.

My lady screamed, resisted, and did all that woman could do, to get free: and more than once, people who heard her cry out for help were put on a wrong scent; and had we not met with your honour (who would see with your own eyes, and hear with your own ears) the affair had been all over in the way Sir Hargrave wished, and was at so much pains and expence to effect. For, Sir, the chariot generally drove so fast, that before passengers could have *resolved* whether to interfere or not, we should have been out of sight or reach.

Sir Hargrave is in the greatest rage with us all, because we stood not better by him. He refuses any favour to me, and threatens to pistol me the moment he sees me. That's to be my reward.

We were four at setting out from Paddington: but one of the servants was dispatched to prepossess an old servant of Sir Hargrave's mother, at Colnebrook, who keeps there a kind of haberdashery shop; and where he proposed to get some refreshment for the lady, if he could make her take any. For my part, I wonder how she kept out of fits on the road. She had enow of them at Paddington.

The two servants who staid about Sir Hargrave, are discharged with all the marks of indignation that a master incensed by such a disappointment could express; and, as I said before, he is resolved to pistol me the moment he sees me. Yet I too well served him for the peace of my conscience.

A coach-and-four was ordered to carry the widow and her two daughters to Reading, to the New Inn there, where they were to reside for a week or so, till all was blown over; and that they might be out of the way of answering questions: and my *brother* Awberry, as I call him, and hope to make him (for he is a very honest man) was to go to them there.

And there, in all probability, had Sir Hargrave succeeded, and been as good as his word, should I have been the husband of as tender-hearted a young woman as any in the parish she lives in.

Here is a very long letter, may it please you, Sir. I have shortened it, however, as much as I could: but in hatred to myself, and the vile ways I have, by excess of good-nature, and by meeting with wicked masters, been drawn into—For the clearing of my sister's character, who lives in credit among her neighbours, and of every other person who might otherwise have been suspected—In justice to Mrs. Awberry's and her two daughters, and her son's characters—And in justice *so far* to Sir Hargrave's, as that he intended marriage (and had he *not*, he would have found no friends in his designs at Paddington) and so far as to clear him of having not offered the least incivility to my lady—[Had he intended, or been provoked so to do, he was too well watched by the widow, and her daughters, to have been permitted; and that by my own request, which was, that they should be ready to run in whenever they heard her cry out, and that they would not leave Sir Hargrave alone with my lady

for six minutes, till their hands were joined in wedlock]—In justice I say to all these persons, I thought proper thus to give you, Sir, all that I knew relating to this wicked transaction. And if, may it please your honour, I were to be taken up, I could say no more before a magistrate; except this, which I had like to have forgot; which is, that had it not been for me, some mischief might have been done, between Sir Hargrave's servants and yours, if not to your honour's person.

All that I most humbly beg, is the pardon of so sweet a lady. I have chosen, ever-to-be-honoured Sir, to write to you, whose goodness is so generally talked of, and who have so nobly redeemed and protected her. Mr. Reeves, I know, has suffered too much in his mind to forgive me. He is a worthy gentleman. I am sorry for the disturbance I have given him. I have hopes given me, that I shall get employment on the keys, or as a tide-waiter extraordinary.

Please the Lord, I will never, never more, be the tool of wicked masters. All I wish for is, to be able to do justice to the love of an honest young woman; and I am resolved, whether so enabled or not, to starve, rather than to go any more, no, not for a single hour, into the service of the iniquitous gentlemen I have so often named in this long letter.

If I might be assured, that I may pursue unmolested any honest calling, so as that I may not be tempted or driven into unhappy courses, my heart would be at rest.

There might have been murder in this affair: that shocks me to think of. O Sir, good, excellent, brave, and the most worthy of gentlemen, you have given to *me* as great a deliverance, as you have to the *lady*: yea, greater; for mine may be a deliver-

ance, if I make a proper use of it, of soul as well as body. Which God grant, as also your honour's health and prosperity, to the prayers of

Your honour's ever-devoted
Humble servant,
WILLIAM WILSON.

I thought I had something else to say: something it is of *high* importance: your life is threatened, Sir: God preserve your precious life. Amen!

LETTER XXXVI.

MISS BYRON TO MISS SELBY.

Friday, February 24.

My cousin Reeves has given assurance to the sister of that Wilson, that he may, unmolested by any of us, pursue the best means he can fall upon for the obtaining of an honest livelihood.

In every-thing it is determined to follow the advice of my deliverer.

What a letter is that fellow's! What men are there in the world!

Of such we have read: but I hoped, that I might have escaped suffering by any such.

We are extremely disturbed at the fellow's postscript: and the more, as we are told by several people, that Sir Hargrave will not sit down quietly; but threatens vengeance upon Sir Charles. I wish I had not come to London.

I hope my grandmamma's spirits are not affected by what she knows of the matter. It was very good of my aunt Selby to take the measures she did, in softening every circumstance, and not to let her

know any-thing till the danger was over. But indeed it was but the natural effect of that prudence which regulates all the actions of my honoured aunt.

My grandmamma has such strength of mind, that now she knows I am safe, and not unhappy, I dare say she will by degrees bear to hear my *narrations* read. She will be more uneasy if she thinks any-thing is kept from her.

Yet I know that her tenderness and her love for her Harriet will cost her some anguish, some sighs, some tears, as she reads, or hears read, the cruelty her girl has been treated with: who, so tenderly brought up, so greatly indulged, never before knew what harshness was. But then she will have more joy, I hope, in my deliverance, than she will have pain in my sufferings. And pray let her know, that I am every day less and less sensible of the pain in my stomach, of which I was so apprehensive, as really, at the time, to think it a mortal blow. My grandmamma has told us girls, you know, my Lucy, twenty and twenty frightful stories of the vile enterprizes of men, against innocent creatures; and will therefore call to mind stories which have concluded much worse than, blessed be God, mine has done.

* * *

Just now I have received a congratulatory pacquet of letters:

One from my aunt Selby, such a sweetly kind, such a truly maternal letter!

One from my dearest grandmamma. I will put it next my heart, whenever I feel there any of that pain, of which she is so kindly apprehensive.

One from Nancy—Dear girl!—She is very generous to forget her own malady to condole and congratulate me. Your brother James, my Lucy, has written me a very kind letter. He is a good young

man: God keep him so! What a mischievous creature is a bad man!

I have a charming letter, by the post, from my godfather Deane: he has heard nothing of what has happened; and I am sure is too solicitous for my welfare, to take it well, if I do not let him know something about it: I will therefore soon write to him.

But *your* letter, my Lucy!—What, I warrant, you thought I had forgot *your* letter in the enumeration of the contents of the precious pacquet! If I *had*, your goodness, your love, might have made you forgive me: but I never would have forgiven myself.

But you and I, my dear, write for all to see what we write: and so I reserved yours to be last-mentioned. Only I slid in my godfather Deane's between; not because I love him better than I do my Lucy--No, that is impossible!—But because I had a mind to shew you, that I was hastening to be quite well, and so assumed my little saucy tricks, and surprises, as if it were *possible* for me to be heedless, where my love to my Lucy was in the question.

And so you expect the particular character and description of the persons of this more than amiable brother and sister. Need you to have told me that you do? And could you think that after having wasted so many quires of paper in giving you the characters of people, many of whom deserved not to be drawn out from the common crowd of mortals, I would forbear to give you those of persons who adorn the age in which they live, and even human nature?

You don't question, you say, if I begin in their praises, but my gratitude will make me write in a *sublime style;* so you phrase it; and are ready, you

promise me, to take with allowance, all the fine things from me, which Mr. Reeves has already taught you to expect.

You may be right in your expectations, as far as I know; for my grandfather (so many years ago) used to say, that his little Byron was an enthusiast in her gratitude. But, however, when I say any-thing of the exalted minds, of the expanded hearts, of the amiable manners, of this happy brother and sister, which seems to exceed, in my praises, the bounds you will all be willing to set me, then let the overflowings be carried to account of the *grateful* enthusiasm, and *only* to that.

Which shall I begin with? You will have a sharp look-out upon me, you say: Ah, my Lucy! I know what you mean. But I am safe from every-thing but my gratitude, I will assure you.

And so, if I begin with the character of the brother, then will you join with my uncle, shake your head, and cry, Ah! my Harriet! If I begin with the sister, will you not say, that I save my choicest subject for the last? How difficult is it to avoid censure, when there is a resolution taken to be censorious.

Well, but keep a *look-out*, if you please, my Lucy: not the least shadow of reserve shall it give to my heart: my pen shall be honest to that heart; and I shall be benefited, I am sure, by the *faithful wounds* of such affectionate, and equally-beloved as revered *friends*—And so, pen, take thy course.

Miss Grandison—Yes, my volant, my self-conducted quill, begin with the sister, say my Lucy what she pleases—

Miss Grandison is about twenty-four; of a fine stature: she has dignity in her aspect; and a very penetrating black eye, with which she does what she pleases: her hair is black, very fine, and naturally curls: she is not fair; but her complexion is delicate

and clear, and promises a long duration to her loveliness: her features are generally regular: her nose is a little aquiline; but that is so far from being a blemish, that it gives a kind of majesty to her other features: her teeth are white and even: her mouth is perfectly lovely; and a modest archness appears in her smiles, that makes one both love and fear her, when she begins to speak. She is finely shaped; and, in her air and whole appearance, perfectly genteel.

She herself says, that before her brother came to England, she was thought to be proud, pert, and lofty: but I hardly believe her; for the man lives not, it is my belief, who in fourteen months time (and Sir Charles has not been longer arrived) could so totally eradicate those qualities in a mind of which they had taken possession, as that they should not occasionally shew themselves.

She has charming spirits. I dare say she sings well, from the airs she now-and-then warbles in the gaiety of her heart, as she goes up and down stairs: she is very polite; yet has a vein of raillery, that, were she *not* polite, would give one too much apprehension for one's ease: but I am sure she is frank, easy, and good humoured: and, by turning over all the just and handsome things which are attributed to herself, to her brother's credit, she must be equally humble and generous.

She says, she has but lately taken a very great liking to reading: but I am ready to question what she says, when she speaks any-thing that some would construe to her disadvantage. She pretends, that she was too volatile, too gay, too airy, to be confined to sedentary amusements. Her father, however, according to the genteelest and most laudable modern education for women, had given her a master, who taught her history and geography; in both

which she *acknowledges* she made some progress. In music, she *owns* she has skill: but I am told by her maid who attended me by her young lady's direction, and who delights to praise her mistress, that she reads and speaks French and Italian; that she writes finely; and is greatly admired for her wit, prudence, and obligingness. Nobody, said Jenny (who is a sensible young woman, a clergyman's daughter, well educated, and very obliging) can stand against her good-natured raillery: her brother, she says, is not spared: but he takes delight in her vivacity, and gives way to it; when it is easy to see, that he could take her down, if he pleased. And then, added this good young woman, she is an excellent manager in a family, finely as she is educated [I rejoiced to hear that, for the honour of our reading ladies, as in Miss Clements's case]: she knows every-thing, and how to direct what should be done, from the private family-dinner, to a sumptuous entertainment: and every day inspects, and approves, or alters, the bill of fare: by the way, my Lucy, she is an early riser—Do you mind that? And so can do every-thing with ease, pleasure, and without hurry and confusion: for all her servants are early risers of course. What servants can for shame be in bed, at a reasonable hour to be up, when they have a master or mistress's example for early rising?

Yet this fine lady loves to go to the public places, and often goes, and makes a brilliant figure there. She has time for them, and earns her pleasures by her early rising.

Miss Grandison, Jenny tells me, has two humble servants [I wonder she has not two-and-twenty]: one is Sir Walter Watkyns, a man of a large estate in Somersetshire; the other is Lord G. son of the Earl of G.; but neither of them highly approved by her: yet Jenny says, they are both of them hand-

some men, and admired by the ladies: this makes me afraid, that they are modern men; and pay their court by the exterior appearance, rather than by interior worth. Who, my Lucy, that has heard what my late grandfather has said, and my grandmamma still says, of the men in their youthful days, will not say, that we have our lots cast in an age of petits maitres, and insignificants?

Such an amiable woman is Miss Charlotte Grandison—May I be found, on further acquaintance, but half as amiable in her eyes, as she is in mine!—Don't be jealous, Lucy! I hope I have a large heart. I hope there is room in it for half a dozen sweet female friends!—Yes, although another love were to intervene. I could not bear, that even the affection due to the man of my choice, were I to marry, should, like Aaron's rod, swallow up all the rest.

But now for her brother—my deliverer!—

But pray now, Lucy, don't you come with your sharp *look-out:* I warrant you will expect on this occasion to read the tumults of the poor girl's heart in her character and description of a man, to whom she is so much obliged!—But what if she disappoint you, and yet do justice to his manifold excellencies? What if she find some faults in him, that his sister has not?

Parading Harriet, methinks you say! Teazing girl! Go on, go on; leave it to *us* to find you out: and take care that the very faults you pretend to discover, do not pass for a colour only, and lead to your detection.

Thank you, Lucy, for your caution: but I will not be obliged to it. My pen shall follow the dictates of my heart; and if it be as honest to me, as I think it is to every-body else, I hope I have nothing to fear either from *your* look-out, or, which is still a sharper, my uncle Selby's.

Sir Charles Grandison, in his person, is really a very fine man. He is tall; rather slender than full: his face in shape is a fine oval: he seems to have florid health; health confirmed by exercise.

His complexion seems to have been naturally too fine for a man: but as if he were above being regardful of it, his face is overspread with a manly sunniness [I want a word] that shews he has been in warmer climates than England: and so it seems he has; since the tour of Europe has not contented him. He has visited some parts of Asia, and even of Afric, Egypt particularly.

I wonder what business a *man* has for such fine teeth, and so fine a mouth, as Sir Charles Grandison might boast of, were he vain.

In his aspect there is something great and noble, that shews him to be of rank. Were kings to be chosen for beauty and majesty of person, Sir Charles Grandison would have few competitors. His eye— Indeed, my Lucy, his eye shews, if possible, more of sparkling intelligence than that of his sister—

Now pray be quiet, my dear uncle Selby! What is beauty in a man to me? You all know, that I never thought beauty a qualification in a man.

And yet, this grandeur in his person and air is accompanied with so much ease and freedom of manners, as engages our love with our reverence. His good breeding renders him very accessible. His sister says, he is always the first to break through the restraints, and to banish the diffidences, that will generally attend persons on a quite new acquaintance. He *may;* for he is sure of being acceptable in whatever he does or says.

Very true, Lucy: shake your head, if you please.

In a word, he has such an easy, yet manly politeness, as well in his dress, as in his address (no singularity appearing in either) that were he *not* a fine

figure of a man, but were even plain and hard-featured, he would be thought (what is far more eligible in a man, than mere beauty) very agreeable.

Sir Charles Grandison, my dear, has travelled, we may say, to some purpose.

Well might his sister tell Mr. Reeves, that whenever he married, he would break half a score hearts.

Upon my word, Lucy, he has too many personal advantages for a woman, who loved him with *peculiarity*, to be easy with, whatever may be *his* virtue, from the foible our sex in general love to indulge for handsome men. For, O my dear, women's eyes are sad giddy things; and will run away with their sense, with their understandings, beyond the power of being overtaken either by stop thief, or hue-and-cry.

I know that here you will bid me take care not to increase the number of the giddy: and so I will, my Lucy.

The good sense of this real fine gentleman is not, as I can find, rusted over by sourness, by moroseness; he is above quarrelling with the world for trifles: but he is still more above making such compliances with it, as would impeach either his honour or conscience. Once Miss Grandison, speaking of her brother, said, My brother is valued by those who know him best, not so much for being a handsome man; not so much for his birth and fortune; nor for this or that single worthiness; as for being, in the great and yet comprehensive sense of the word, a *good man*. And at another time she said, that he lived to himself, and to his own heart; and that though he had the happiness to please every-body, yet he made the judgment or approbation of the world matter but of second consideration. In a word, added she, Sir Charles Grandison, my *brother*

(and when she looks proud, it is when she says, *my brother*) is not to be misled either by false glory, or false shame, which he calls, The great snares of virtue.

What a man is this, so to act!—What a woman is this, so to distinguish her brother's excellencies!

What a poor creature am I, compared to either of them! And yet I have had my admirers. So perhaps may still more faulty creatures among their inferiors. If, my Lucy, we have so much good sense as to make fair comparisons, what have we to do but to look up, rather than downward, in order to obtain the grace of humility?

But let me tell you, my dear, that Sir Charles does not *look* to be so great a self-denier, as his sister seems to think him, when she says, he lives to himself, and to his own heart, rather than to the opinion of the world.

He dresses to the fashion, rather richly, 'tis true, than gaudily; but still richly: so that he gives his fine person its full consideration. He has a great deal of vivacity in his whole aspect; as well as in his eye. Mrs. Jenny says, that he is a great admirer of handsome women. His equipage is perfectly in taste, though not so much to the glare of taste, as if he aimed either to inspire or shew emulation. He seldoms travels without a set, and suitable attendants; and, what I think seems a little to savour of singularity, his horses are not docked: their tails are only tied up when they are on the road. This I took notice of when we came to town. I want, methinks, my dear, to find some fault in his outward appearance, were it but to make you think me impartial; my gratitude to him, and my veneration for him, notwithstanding.

But if he be of opinion that the tails of these noble animals are not only a natural ornament, but are

of real use to defend them from the vexatious insects that in summer are so apt to annoy them (as Jenny once told me was thought to be his reason for not depriving his cattle of a defence, which nature gave them) how far from a dispraise is this humane consideration! And how, in the more minute as well as we may suppose in the greater instances, does he deserve the character of the man of mercy, who will be merciful to his beast!

I have met with persons, who call those men *good*, that yet allow themselves in liberties which no good man can take. But I dare say, that Miss Grandison means by *good*, when she calls her brother, with so much pride, *a good man*, what I, and what you, my Lucy, would understand by the word.

With so much spirit, life, and gallantry, in the first appearance of Sir Charles Grandison, you may suppose, that had I not been so dreadfully terrified and ill-used, and so justly apprehensive of worse treatment; and had I been offered another protection; I should hardly have acted the frighted bird flying from the hawk, to which, as Mr. Reeves tells me, Sir Charles (though politely, and kindly enough, yet too sensibly for my recollection) compared me.

Do you wonder, Lucy, that I cannot hold up my head, when I recollect the figure I must make in that odious masquerade-habit, hanging by my clasping arms about the neck of such a young gentleman? Can I be more effectually humbled than by such a recollection? And yet is not this an instance of that *false shame* in me, to which Sir Charles Grandison is so greatly superior?

Surely, surely, I have *had* my punishment for *my* compliances with this foolish world. False glory, and false shame, the poor Harriet has never been totally above. Why was I so much indulged? Why was I allowed to stop so many miles short of my

journey's end, and then complimented, as if I had no farther to go?—But surely, I was past all *shame*, when I gave my consent to make such an appearance as I made, among a thousand strangers, at a masquerade!

But now, I think, something offers of blame in the character of this almost faultless man, as his sister, and her Jenny, represent him to be.

I cannot think, from a hint given by Miss Grandison, that he is quite so frank, and so unreserved, as his sister is. Nay, it was more than a hint: I will repeat her very words: she had been mentioning her own openness of heart, and yet confessing that she would have kept one or two things from him, that affected him not. 'But as for my brother, said she, he winds one about, and about, yet seems not to have more curiosity than one would wish him to have. Led on by his smiling benignity, and fond of his attention to my prattle, I have caught myself in the midst of a tale of which I intended not to tell him one syllable.

'O Sir Charles! where am I got? have I said; and suddenly stopt.

'Proceed, my Charlotte! No reserves to your nearest friend.

'Yet he has *his*, and I have winded and winded about him, as he had done about me; but all to no purpose.

'Nevertheless, he has found means, insensibly, to set me on again with my own story, till I had told him all I knew of the matter; and all the time I was intending only that my frankness should be an example to him; when he, instead of answering my wishes, double-locked the door of his heart, and left not so much as the key-hole uncovered by which I might have peeped into it; and this in one or two points, that I thought it imported me to know. And then have I been ready to scold.'

Now this reserve to such a sister, and in points that she thinks it imports her to know, is what I do not like in Sir Charles. A *friend* as well as a sister! ought there to be a secret on one side, when there is none on the other? Very likely, he would be as reserved to a wife: and is not marriage the highest state of friendship that mortals can know? And can friendship and reserve be compatible? Surely, No.

His sister, who cannot think he has one fault, excuses him, and says, that her brother has no other view in drawing her on to reveal her own heart, but the better to know how to serve and oblige her.

But then, might not the same thing be said in behalf of the curiosity of so generous a sister? Or, is Sir Charles so conscious of his own superiority, as to think he can give advice to her, but wants not hers to him? Or, thinks he meanly of our sex, and highly of his own? Yet there are but two years difference in their age: and from sixteen to twenty-four, I believe, women are generally more than two years aforehand with the men in ripeness of understanding; though, after that time, the men may ripen into a superiority.

This observation is not my own; for I heard a very wise man once say, That the intellects of women usually ripen sooner than those of men; but that those of men, when ripened, like trees of slow growth, generally hold longer, are capable of higher perfection, and serve to nobler purposes.

Sir Charles has seen more of the world, it may be said, than his sister has: he has travelled. But is not human nature the same in every country, allowing only for different customs?—Do not love, hatred, anger, malice, *all* the passions in short, good or bad, shew themselves by like effects in the faces, hearts, and actions of the people of every country?

And let men make ever such strong pretensions to knowledge, from their far-fetched and dear-bought experience, cannot a penetrating spirit learn as much from the passions of a Sir Hargrave Pollexfen in England, as it could from a man of the same or the like ill qualities, in Spain, in France, or in Italy? And why is the Grecian Homer, to this day, so much admired, as he is in all these nations, and in every other nation where he has been read, and will be, to the world's end, but because he writes from nature? And is not the language of nature one language throughout the world, though there are different modes of speech to express it by?

But I shall go out of my depth. All I mean (and, from the frankness of my own heart, you will expect from me such a declaration) is, that I do not love that a man so *nearly* perfect, be his motives what they will, should have reserves to such a sister. Don't you think, Lucy, that this seems to be a kind of *fault* in Sir Charles Grandison? Don't you think, that it would mingle some *fear* in a sister's love of him? And should one's love of so amiable a brother be dashed or allayed with *fear*? He is said to be a good man: and a good man I dare say he *is*: What secrets can a good man have, that such a sister, living with him in the same house, and disdaining not, but, on the contrary, priding herself in, the title of her brother's *housekeeper*, should not be made acquainted with? Will a man so generous look upon her as he would upon a *mere* housekeeper?—Does not confidence engage confidence?—And are they not by *nature*, as well as inclination, friends?

But I fancy I am acting the world, in its malevolence, as well as impertinence: that world, which thinks itself affronted by great and superior merit; and takes delight to bring down exalted worth to its own level. But, at least, you will collect from

what I have written, an instance of my *impartiality*: and see, that, though bound to Sir Charles by a tie of gratitude which never can be dissolved, I cannot excuse him, if he be guilty of distance and reserve to his generous sister, which she is above shewing to him.

If I am allowed to be so happy, as to cultivate this desirable acquaintance [and I hope it is not their way to leave those whom they have relieved and raised, in order to shine upon, and bless, only *new* objects of compassion] then will I closely watch every step of this excellent man; in hope, however, to find him as perfect as report declares him, that I may fearlessly make him my theme, as I shall delight to make his sister my example. And if I were to find any *considerable* faults in him, never fear, my dear, but my gratitude will enlarge my charity in his favour. But I shall, at the same time, arm my heart with those remembered failings, lest my gratitude should endanger it, and make me a hopeless fool.

Now, my uncle, do not be *very* hard on your niece. I am sure, very sure, that I am not in danger *as yet*: and indeed I will tell you, by my Lucy, whenever I find out that I am. Spare, therefore, my dear uncle Selby, all your *conjectural constructions.*

And indeed you should in pity spare me, my dear Sir, at present; for my spirits are still weak: I have not yet forgiven myself for the masquerade affair; especially since Mr. Reeves has hinted to me, that Sir Charles Grandison (as he judges from what he dropt about that foolish amusement) approves not of masquerades. And yet self-partiality has suggested several strong pleas in my favour; indeed by way of extenuation only. How my judge, CONSCIENCE, will determine upon those pleas, when

counsel has been heard on both sides, I cannot say: yet I think, that an acquittal from this brother and sister would go a great way to make my conscience easy.

I have not said one half of what I intended to say of this extraordinary man. But having imagined, from the equal love I have to his admirable sister, that I had found something to blame him for, my impartiality has carried me out of my path; and I know not how to recover it, without going a great way back. Let therefore what I have further to say, mingle in with my future narratives, as new occasions call it forth.

But yet I will not suffer any other subject to interfere with that which fills my heart with the praises, the due praises, of this worthy brother and sister; to which I intended to consecrate this rambling and very imperfect letter: and which here I will conclude, with assurances (however needless I hope they are) of duty, love, and gratitude, where so much due from your

HARRIET BYRON.

LETTER XXXVII.

MISS BYRON. IN CONTINUATION.

February 24, and 25.

Now have I near a week to go back, my Lucy, with my current narrative, having been thrown behindhand by the long letters I have been obliged to write, to give you an account of my distress, of my deliverance, of the characters of this noble brother and sister, and a multitude of coincidences and reflections, which all my dear friends expect, as they fall in, from the pen of their Harriet. And this let-

ter shall therefore be a kind of diary of that week; only that I will not repeat what my cousin Reeves has told me he has written.

On *Monday* I was conducted home in safety, by my kind protector, and his amiable sister.

Mrs. Reeves, Lady Betty, and Miss Clements, are in love with them both.

My cousin has told you, how much they disappointed us, in declining to stay dinner. What shall we do, if they are not as fond of our company as we are of theirs? We are not used to be slighted, you know: and to be slighted by those we love, there can be no bearing of that: but I hope this will not be the case.

At tea, the name of Sir Rowland Meredith carried me instantly down.

Mr. Reeves had told the good knight, on his calling on the Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and on this day, before we returned from Colnebrook, that I had been over-fatigued at the masquerade on Thursday night [*and so I was*]; and was gone a little way out of town. *Carried* he should have said: I was carried, with a witness!

Sir Rowland took notice, that I must have had a smart illness for the time, by my altered countenance. You are, and must be, ever lovely, Miss Byron: but I think you look not quite so serene, you don't look so *composed*, as you used to do. But I was afraid you were denied to my longing sight. I was afraid you would let your papa go down to Caermarthen, without giving him an opportunity to bless his cross girl. It is in vain, I fear, to urge you—He stopt, and looked full in my face—Pray, Sir Rowland, said I, how does my *brother* Fowler?

Why, ay, that's the deuce of it! Your *brother* Fowler. But as the honest man says, so say I; I will not teaze you. But never, never, will you have

—But no more of that—I come to take my leave of you. I should have set out this very morning, could I have seen you on Saturday, or yesterday: but I shall go to-morrow morning early. You are glad of that, madam, I am sure.

Indeed, Sir Rowland, I shall always respect and value you: and I hope I shall have your good wishes, Sir—

Yes, yes, madam, you need not doubt it. And I will humble all the proud women in Wales, by telling them of Miss Byron.

You tell me, my Lucy, that you were all moved at one of the conversations I gave you between the knight, Mr. Fowler, and myself.

Were I to be as particular in my account of what passed on Sir Rowland's taking leave of me, as I was on that other occasion, and were you to judge by the effect his honest tenderness had on me, as I craved his blessing, and as he blessed me (the big tears, unheeded by himself, straying down his reverend cheeks) I think you would have been in like manner affected.

Mr. Fowler is to go down after him—If—if—if, said the knight, looking fervently in my face—

I should be glad, I said, to see, and to wish my *brother* a good journey.

Tuesday morning early I had a kind enquiry after my rest, from Miss Grandison, in her brother's name, as well as in her own. And about eleven o'clock came the dear lady herself. She would run up stairs to me, following Sally—In her dressing-room, say you?—She shall not come down.

She entered with the maid—Writing, my dear! said she. I one day hope, my Harriet, you will shew me all you write—There, there (sitting down by me) no bustle. And how *does* my fair friend?—*Well*—I see *very* well—*To* a lover—or *of* a lover—that's the same thing.—

Thus, sweetly familiar, ran she on.

Mrs. Reeves entered: Excuse me, madam, said Miss Grandison; this is but one of my flying visits, as I call them: my next shall be to *you*. But perhaps I may not make it in form neither: we are relations, you know. How does Mr. Reeves? He is a good man. At home?—

He is, madam, and will be rejoiced—

I know he will—Why, madam, this our Byron, our Harriet, I should say, looks charmingly!—You had best lock her up. There are many more Sir Hargraves in the world, than there are Miss Byrons.

She told me, that Sir Charles had set out that morning early for Canterbury. He will be absent two or three days, said she. He charged me with his compliments. He did nothing but talk of his new-found sister, from the time he parted with you. I shall promote *your* interest with him, in order to strengthen *my own*. I want to find him out.

Some love-engagements, I suppose, madam? said Mrs. Reeves—It is impossible but the ladies—

The ladies! Ay, that's the thing! The deuce is in them! They will not stay to be asked. These men, the best of them, love nothing but what is attended with difficulty. But all his love-matters he keeps to himself; yet knows all mine—except one little *entanglement*—Mr. Reeves hears not what we say (looking about her): but you, my dear, shall reveal to me your *sneaking* passion, if you have one, and I will discover mine—But not to *you*, Mrs. Reeves. No married women shall I trust with what lies in the innermost fold of my heart. Your husbands are always the wiser *for what you* know; though *they* can keep their own counsel: and then, Harriet, Satan-like, the ungenerous wretches, becoming both tempters and accusers, laugh at us, and make it wonderful for a woman to keep a secret.

The ladies will not stay to be asked, Lucy!—An odd hint!—*These men, the best of them, love nothing but what comes to them with difficulty:—he keeps all his love-matters to himself.*—ALL! my Lucy!—But indeed she had said before, that if Sir Charles married, *half a dozen hearts would be broken!*

This is nothing to *me*, indeed. But, once more, I wonder why a man of a turn so laudable, should have *any* secrets? The more a good man permits any one to know of his heart, the more good he might do, by way of example.—And has he, can he have, *so many* love-secrets, and yet will he not let them transpire to such a sister?—Whom (and so she once hinted) it imported to know something of them. But, *he* knows best. I am very impertinent to be more concerned for his sister, than she is for herself. But I do love her. And one can no more bear to have those slighted whom we love, than one's self.

It is very difficult, Lucy, to know one's self. I am afraid I have a little spice of censoriousness in my temper, which I knew nothing of till now: but, no, it is not censoriousness neither. I cannot be so mean, as to be censorious: and yet I can now, methinks, (for the first time) a little account for those dark spirits who may be too much obliged; and who, despairing to be able ever to return the obligation, are ready to quarrel with the obliger.

Spiteful men say, that we women know not ourselves; know not our own hearts. I believe there is something of truth in the aspersion: but as men and women are *brothers and sisters,* as I may say, are not the men *equally* censurable? And should not we women *say* so, were we to be as spiteful as they? Must it needs be, that a daughter of the same father and mother must be more silly, more unsteady, more absurd, more impertinent, than her brother? I hope not.

Mrs. Reeves, not knowing, as she said afterwards,

but Miss Grandison might have something to say to me, withdrew.

I believe I told you last Sunday, said Miss Grandison, of a cousin that we have: a good-natured young fellow: he supped with us last night. Sir Charles was so full of your praises, yet not letting him into your history, that he is half-wild to see you.

God forbid, thought I, when she had gone only thus far, that this *cousin* should be proposed!—What an easy thing is it, my Lucy, to alarm a woman on the side of her vanity!

He breakfasted with me this morning, continued she, after Sir Charles had set out; and knowing that I intended to make you a flying visit, he besought me to take him with me: but I would not, my dear, bring an inundation of new admirers upon you: he has a great acquaintance; and is very bold, though not indecent: he is thought to be a modern wit, you must know; and, to speak after an admirable writer, a *minute* philosopher; and thinks he has something to say for himself when his cousin is not present. Before Sir Charles arrived, and when we were in expectation of his coming, being apprised that Sir Charles had a serious turn, he threatened to play upon him, and, as he phrased it, to *bamboozle* him; for these wits and witlings have a language peculiar to themselves. But on Sir Charles's arrival, in two conversations, he drew in his horns, as we say; and now reverences those good qualities which he has not, however, the grace to imitate. Now I will not answer, but you may have a visit from him to see the loveliest woman in England. If he comes, see him, or not, as you please; and think not yourself under any civil obligation to my brother, or me, to go out of your own way: but I hope he will not be so impertinent. I don't wish you to see him out of my brother's company; because you will see him then to his own advantage. And yet he has such a no-

tion that we women love to be admired, and to have handsome things said to us, that he imagines, the visit of a man, made for *that* purpose, will give him as free a welcome to the finest woman in the world, as painters give to those who come to see their pictures, and for the like reason. But no more of Mr. Grandison. Yet I thought proper to prepare you, if he should take so confident a liberty.

I thanked her.

Well but, my dear, you seem to have a long parcel of writing before you; one, two, three, four—Eight leaves—Upon my word!—But Mr. Reeves told me you are a writer; and that you gave an account of all that befel you, to *our* grandmother Shirley, to *our* uncle and aunt Selby, to *our* cousins Lucy and Nancy —You see I remember every name: and will you one day let me see what you write?

Most willingly, madam—

Madam! interrupted she. So formal! *Charlotte* say.

With all my heart, my ever-amiable, my ever-kind, Charlotte.

So, so—Well may the men say, we love flattery, when rather than want it, we will flatter one another.

I was going to disclaim flattery: Hush, hush, hush, my dear! I doubt not your sincerity. You are a grateful and good girl: but dare you, will you, shew me all and every-thing about that Greville, that Orme, that Fowler, that Fenwick?—You see, I forget none of the names that your cousin Reeves told me of on Saturday last, and which I made you talk of last Sunday.

All and every-thing, Miss Grandison: But will you tell me of *your* gentleman?

Will I! No doubt of it: How can young women be together one quarter of an hour, and not lead one another into talk of their lovers? Lord, my dear, those secrets, Sir Charles once said, are the cement of young women's friendships.

And could Sir Charles—

Could Sir Charles!—Yes, yes, yes. Do you think a man can be a judge of human nature, and leave *women* out of the question? Why, my dear, he finds us out in a minute. Take care of yourself, Harriet —If—

I shall be afraid of him—

What if you have a good conscience, my dear!—

She then looked very archly. She made me blush.

She looked *more* archly. I blushed, I believe, a deeper dye.

Did I not tell you, Lucy, that she could do what she pleased with her eyes?—But what did she *mean* by this?

In my conscience, my Harriet, little or much, I believe we women are all rogues in our hearts.

And does Miss Grandison say that from her own conscience?

I believe I do: but I must fly: I have ten more visits to pay before I go home to dress. You will tell me all about your fellows, you say?

And you will tell me, about your *entanglement*, as you called it.

Why that's a difficulty upon me: but you must encourage me by your freedom, and we will take up our wretches, and lay them down again, one by one, as we run them over, and bid them lie still and be quiet till we recal them to our memory.

But I have not one lover, my Charlotte, to tell *you* of: I always gave them their dismission—

And I have but two, that at present I care to own; and they *won't* be dismissed: but then I have half a dozen, I believe, that have said extravagant things to me; and we must look upon them as lovers elect, you know, who only want to be coquetted with.

Miss Grandison, I hope, cannot think of coquetting?

Not much: only a little now-and-then, to pay the men in their own coin.

Charming vivacity! said I. I shall be undone, if you don't love me.

No fear, no fear of that!—I am a whimsical creature: but the sun is not more constant in his course than I am steady in my friendships. And these communications on both sides will rivet us to each other, if you treat me not with reserve.

She arose to go in a hurry. Abate, my dear Charlotte, of half your other visits, and favour me with your company a little longer.

Give me some chocolate then; and let me see your cousin Reeves's: I like them. Of the ten visits, six of the ladies will be gone to sales, or to plague tradesmen, and buy nothing: any-where rather than at home: The devil's at home, is a phrase: and our modern ladies live as if they thought so. Two of the other four called upon me, and hardly alighted: I shall do so by them. The other two I shall have paid my compliments to in one quarter of an hour.

I rang for chocolate; and to beg my cousins company.

They wanted but the word: in they came. My apartment (which she was pleased to admire) then became the subject of a few moments' conversation: and then a much better took place: Sir Charles, I mean.

I asked, If her brother had any relations at Canterbury?

I protest I don't know, said she: but *this* I know, that I have none there. Did I not hint to you, that Sir Charles [illegible] secrets?—But he sometimes loves to play with [illegible] curiosity: he knows I have a reasonable quantity of that.

Were I his sister—

Then you must do as he would have you, Harriet.

I know him to be steady in his purposes: but he is besides so good, that I give up any-thing to oblige him—

Your *entanglement*, Charlotte? asked I, smiling. Mr. Reeves knows nothing from that word.

Why, yes, my *entanglement*; and yet I hate to think of it: so no more of that. It is the only secret I have kept from him; and that is, because he has no suspicion of the matter: if he had, though my life were to be the forfeit, I believe he would have it.

She told us, that she expected us soon to dine with her in St. James's Square: but that she must fix Sir Charles. I hope, said she, you will often drop in upon me; as I will upon you. From this time, we will have nothing but conversation visits between us; and we will leave the modern world to themselves; and be queen Elizabeth's women. I am sorry to tell you—Let me whisper it—.

And she did; but loud enough for every one to hear: Although I follow the fashion, and make one fool the more for it, I despise above one half of the women I know.

Miss Grandison, affectedly whispered I again, should *not* do so; because her example is of weight enough to amend them.

I'll be hanged if Miss Byron thinks so, re-whispered she. The age is too far gone. Nothing but a national calamity can do it. But let me tell you, that, at the same time, I despise *more* than one half of the men. But, speaking out, You and I will try to think ourselves wiser than any-body else; and we shall have this comfort, we shall not easily find any of our sex, who by their superior wisdom will give us reason to think ourselves mistaken.

But adieu, adieu, and adieu, my agreeable friends: let me see you, and you, and you, turning to each of the three, as often as is convenient, without cere-

mony: and remember we have been acquainted these hundred years.

Away she hurried, forbidding me to go out of my apartment. Mrs. Reeves could not overtake her. Mr. Reeves had much ado to be in time to make his compliment. She was in her chariot before he could offer his hand.

How pretty it was, my Lucy, in Miss Grandison, to remember the names of all my dear friends! She told me indeed, on Sunday, that she should.

If travelling into foreign countries gives ease and politeness, would not one think that Miss Grandison has visited every European court, as well as her brother? If she has not, was it *necessary* for Sir Charles to go abroad to acquire that freedom and ease which his sister has so happily attained without stirring out of the kingdom?

These men had not best despise us, Lucy. There is not, I hope, so much difference in the genius of the two sexes as the proud ones among theirs are apt to imagine; especially when you draw comparisons from equal degrees in both.

O Mr. Walden, take care of yourself, if ever again you and I meet at Lady Betty's!—But this abominable Sir Hargrave! Not one word more of meeting at Lady Betty's! There saw I first the wretch that still, on recollection, strikes terror into my heart.

Wednesday, a visit from Miss Clements and Lady Betty took me off my writing about two hours; yet I over-writ myself, and was obliged to lie down for about two more. At night we had Sir John Allestree, and his nephew, Miss Allestree, Miss Clements, and Lady Betty, at supper, and cards. But my stomach paining me, about eleven I was permitted to retire to bed.

On *Thursday* I finished my letters, relating my distresses, and deliverance. It was a dreadful subject. I rejoiced when I had concluded it.

The same day Mr. Reeves received Sir Charles's letter, inclosing that of the wretched Wilson. I have often heard my grandfather observe, that men of truly great and brave spirits are most tender and merciful; and that, on the contrary, men of base and low minds are cruel, tyrannical, insolent, wherever they have power. What this short letter, so full of lenity, of mercy, of generous and humane care for the future good of a criminal, and extended to unborn families, as well as to all his acquaintance and friends in being, enables one to judge of the truly heroic Sir Charles Grandison; and what I have experienced of the low, grovelling, unmanly insults of Sir Hargrave Pollexfen (I a poor defenceless silly girl, tricked into his power); are flagrant proofs of the justice of the observation.

I wish with all my heart, that the best woman in the world were queen of a great nation: and that it were in my power, for the sake of enlarging Sir Charles's ability to do good, to make him her consort: then am I morally sure, that I should be the humble means of making a whole people happy!

But as we had all been informed from other hands, of Sir Hargrave's threatenings of Sir Charles's life, Wilson's postscript has fastened a weight on my heart, that will not be removed till the danger is overblown.

This day I had Miss Grandison's compliments, with tender enquiries, brought me; and a desire, that as she uspposed my first visit would be one of thankful duty, meaning to church (for so I had told her it should) my next might be to her.

Yesterday I received the welcome packet from so many kind friends: and I prosecuted with the more vigour, for it, my writing-task. How easily do we glide into subjects that please us!—How swiftly flies the pen!—The characters of Sir Charles and of Miss

Grandison were the subjects; and I was amazed to find how much I had written in so short a time.

Miss Grandison sent me in the evening of this day her compliments joined with those of her brother, who was but just returned from Canterbury.

I wonder what Sir Charles could do at Canterbury so many days, and to have nobody there whom his sister knows.

She would have made me a visit, she sent me word; but that as she expected her brother in the morning, she had intended to have brought him with her. She added, that this morning (*Saturday*) they should both set out for Colnebrooke, in hopes of the Earl and Countess of L. arriving there as this night from *Scotland*.

Do you think, Lucy, it would not have been generous in Sir Charles to have made *one* visit, before he set out for so many days, to *that* Canterbury, to the creature on whom he had laid such an obligation? I can only mean as to the *civility* of the thing, you must think; since he was so good as to join in, nay, to propose, the further intimacy, as a brother, and friend, and so-forth—I wish that Sir Charles be as sincere in his professions as his sister. He may in his travels (possibly he may) have mistaken some gay weeds for fine flowers, and picked them up, and brought them with him to England: and yet, if he has done so, he will, even then, be superior to thousands, who travel, and bring home nothing but the weeds of foreign climates.

He once said, as Miss Grandison told me, that the Countess of L. is still a more excellent woman than my Charlotte. Ah! Sir Charles! You can tell fibs, I believe. I will not forgive in you, those slighter deviations, which we are too apt to pass by in other, even tolerable, men.

I wish you may be in earnest, my good Sir, in proposing to cultivate an intimate friendship with me, as

that of a brother to a sister [Shake your head, my Lucy, if you will, I mean no more] that I may be intitled to tell you your faults, as I see them. In your sister *Harriet* you shall find, though a respectful, yet an open-eyed monitor. Our Charlotte thinks you cannot be wrong in any-thing.

All I fear is, that Sir Charles's tenderness was designed to be excited only while my spirits were weak. Yet he bespoke a brotherly relation to me, before Mr. Reeves, when he brought me home, and supposed me stolen from his family in my infancy. That was going farther than was necessary, if he thought to drop the fraternal character soon.

But might not my own behaviour alarm him? The kind, the considerate man, is perhaps compassionate in his intention. Not distinguishing aright my bashful gratitude, and down-cast eye, he might be afraid, lest I should add one to the half-score, that his sister says will die if he marry.

If this be so, what, my dear, will your Harriet deserve, if *his* caution does not teach *her* some?

After all, I believe, these men in general think our hearts are made of strange combustible materials. A spark struck, a match thrown in—But the best of men, this admirable man, will, I hope, find himself mistaken, if he think so of your Harriet.

What ails me, that I am grown such a boaster! Surely, this horrid attempt of Sir Hargrave has not affected my brain. Methinks I am not, some how or other, as I used to be in my head, or heart, I know not which.

Do you, Lucy, bring me back again, by your reminding love, if you think there is any alteration in your Harriet, for the worse: and the rather, as it may prevent my uncle—

But what makes me so much more afraid of my uncle, than I used to be?—Yet men in their raillery,

[don't, however, read this paragraph to him] are so—I don't know how—so *un*-tender—But let me fall into the hands of my indulgent grandmamma, and aunt Selby, and into your gentle hands, and all will be as it should be.

But what was my subject, before this last seized, and ran away with, my pen? I did not use to wander thus, when I had a beaten path before me. O this vile, vile Sir Hargrave! If I have a fault in my head that did not use to be there, it is entirely owing to him. I am sure my heart is not wrong.

But I can write nothing now but of Miss Grandison and her brother. What entirely new scenes are opened to me by my distress?—May I have cause, as Sir Charles wished, to reap good from the evil!

I will endeavour to bring Miss Clements into an acquaintance with these worthies; that is to say, if I have myself the interest to preserve my footing in their favour.

Lady Betty resolves to recommend *herself*. She *will* be acquainted with them, she says, whether they will or not. And yet I could not bear for Lady Betty that she should be slighted by those whom she dotes upon. That, surely, is one of the heaviest of evils. And yet *self-love*, where it is evidently inherent, will enable one to get over it, I believe, pretty soon; though nothing but *that* and *pride* can, in *such*. Of some use, therefore, you'll be apt to say, are pride and self-love. Why, yes, and so they are, where they are a part of a person's habit. But, O my Lucy, will not a *native* humility render this pride, whose genuine offspring are resentment and ill-will, absolutely unnecessary, and procure for us, unmingled with mortification, the esteem we wish for in the hearts of the worthy?

As to the rest of my new acquaintance in town, till I knew this admirable sister and brother,

took up so much of my paper, though some of them are doubtless very worthy; Adieu—That is to say, as *chosen* subjects—Adieu! says your

HARRIET BYRON.

LETTER XXXVIII.

MISS BYRON TO MISS SELBY.

Saturday night.

LORD have mercy upon me, my dear!—What shall I do?—The vile Sir Hargrave has sent a challenge to Sir Charles!—What may be the event—O that I had not come to London!—This is a copy of the letter, that communicates it. It is from that Bagenhall. But this is the copy of the letter—I will endeavour to transcribe it—But, no, I cannot—My Sally shall write it over. Lord bless me! What shall I do?

TO MISS BYRON.

MADAM, Cavendish Square, February 25.

You might easily believe, that the affair betwixt Sir Hargrave Pollexfen and Sir Charles Grandison could not, after so violent an insult as the former received from the latter, end without consequences.

By all that's sacred, Sir Hargrave knows not that I write.

There is but one way that I can think of to prevent bloodshed; and that, madam, seems to be in your own power.

Sir Hargrave insists upon it, that he meant you nothing but honour. You know the use or abuse of

the power he had obtained over you. If he behaved with indecency, he tells me not the truth.

To make a young lady, whatever were her merit, the wife of a man of near 10,000*l.* a year, and who had declared herself absolutely disengaged in her affections, was not doing dishonour to her, so much as to himself, in the violent measures his love obliged him to take to make her so.

Now, madam, as Sir Charles Grandison was utterly a stranger to you; as Sir Hargrave intended so honourably by you; and as you are not engaged in your affections; if you will consent to be Lady Pollexfen; and if Sir Charles Grandison will ask pardon for his unprovoked knight-errantry; I will not be Sir Hargrave's second in the affair, if he refuse to accept of such satisfaction in full for the violence he sustained.

I solemnly repeat, that Sir Hargrave knows nothing of my writing to you. You may (but I insist upon it, as in confidence to every-body else) consult your cousin Reeves on the subject. Your honour given, that you will in a month's time be Sir Hargrave's, will make me exert all my power with him (and I have reason to think that is not small) to induce him to compromise on those terms.

I went to Sir Charles's house this afternoon, with a letter from Sir Hargrave. Sir Charles was just stepping into his chariot to his sister. He opened it; and, with a civility that became his character, told me he was just going with his sister to Colnebrook, to meet dear friends on their return from Scotland: that he should return on Monday; that the pleasure he should have with his long-absent friends, would not permit him to think of the contents till then: but that the writer should not fail of such an answer as a gentleman ought to give.

Now, madam, I was so much charmed with Sir Charles Grandison's fine person and politeness, and

his character is so extraordinary, that I thought this interval between this night and Monday morning a happy one. And I took it into my head to make the above proposal to you; and I hope you will think it behoves *you*, as much as it does *me*, to prevent the fatal mischief that may otherwise happen to men of their consideration.

I have not the honour of being personally known to you, madam; but my character is too generally established for any one to impute to me any other motives for this my application to you, than those above given. A line left for me at Sir Hargrave's, in Cavendish Square, will come to the hands of, madam,

Your most obedient humble servant,

JAMES BAGENHALL.

O my dear! What a letter!—Mr. Reeves, Mrs. Reeves, are grieved to the heart. Mr. Reeves says, that if Sir Hargrave insists upon it, Sir Charles is obliged, in honour, to meet him—Murderous, vile word *honour!* What, at this rate, is honour! The very opposite to duty, goodness, piety, religion; and to every thing that is or ought to be sacred among men.

How shall I look Miss Grandison in the face? Miss Grandison will hate me!—To be again the occasion of endangering the life of such a brother!

But, what do you think?—Lady Betty is of opinion —Mr. Reeves has consulted Lady Betty Williams, in confidence—Lady Betty says, that if the matter *can* be prevented—Lord bless me! she says, I *ought* to prevent it!—What! by becoming the wife of such a man as Sir Hargrave! so unmanly, so malicious, so low a wretch!—What does Lady Betty mean?—Yet were it in my power to save the life of Sir Charles Grandison, and I refused to do it; for selfish reasons,

refused; for the sake of my worldly happiness; when there are thousands of good wives, who are miserable with bad husbands—But will not the sacrifice of *my* life be accepted by this sanguinary man! That, with all my heart, would I make no scruple to lay down. If the wretch will plunge a dagger in my bosom, and take that for satisfaction, I will not hesitate one moment.

But my cousin said, that he was of opinion, that Sir Charles would hardly be brought to ask pardon. How can I doubt, said I, that the vile man, if he may be induced by this Bagenhall to compromise on my being his wife, will dispense with that punctilio, and wreak on me, were I to be his unhappy property, his whole unmanly vengeance? Is he not spiteful, mean, malicious?—But, abhorred be the thought of my yielding to be the wife of such a man!—Yet, what is the alternative? Were I to die, that wretched alternative would still take place: his malice to the best of men would rather be whetted than blunted, by my irrevocable destiny! O my Lucy! violent as my grief was, dreadful as my apprehensions were, and unmanly as the treatment I met with from the base man, I never was distressed till now!

But should Miss Grandison advise, should she *insist* upon my compliance with the abhorred condition (and has she not a right to insist upon it, for the sake of the safety of her innocent brother?) can I *then* refuse my compliance with it?—Are we not taught, that this world is a state of trial, and of mortification? And is not calamity necessary to wean our vain hearts from it? And if my motive be a motive of justice and gratitude, and to save a life much more valuable to the world than my own; and which, but for me, had not been in danger—Ought I—And yet—Ah! my Lucy, what can I say?—How unhappy! that I cannot consult this dear lady, who has such

an interest in a life so precious, as I might have done, had she been in town!

O Lucy! What an answer, as this unwelcome, this wicked mediator gives it, was that which the excellent man returned to the delivered challenge —"I am going to meet dear friends on their return from Scotland!" What a meeting of joy will be here saddened over, if they know of this shocking challenge! And how can his noble heart overflow with pleasure on this joyful occasion, as it would otherwise have done, with such an important event in suspense, that may make it the last meeting which this affectionate and most worthy of families will ever know! How near may be the life of this dear brother to a period, when he congratulates the safe arrival of his brother and sister! And who can bear to think of seeing, ere one week is over-past, the now rejoicing and harmonious family, clad in mourning for the first of brothers, and first of men? And I, my Lucy, I, the wretched Harriet Byron, to be the cause of all!

And could the true hero say, "That the pleasure he should have on meeting his long-absent friends would not permit him to think of the contents of such a letter, till Monday; but that then the writer should not fail of such an answer—as a gentleman ought to give?"—O my dear Sir Charles! [on this occasion he is, and ought to be, very dear to me] How I dread the answer which vile custom, and false honour, will oblige you, as a gentleman, to give! And is there no way with honour to avoid giving such an answer, as distracts me to be told (as Mr. Reeves tells me) *must* be given, if I, your Harriet, interpose not, to the sacrifice of all my happiness in this life?

But Mr. Reeves asks, May not this Bagenhall, though he says Sir Hargrave knows nothing of his

writing, have written in concert with him?—What if he has, does not the condition remain? And will not the resentment, on the refusal, take place?—And is not the challenge delivered into Sir Charles's hands? And has he not declared, that he will send an answer to it on Monday? This is carrying the matter beyond contrivance or stratagem. Sir Charles, so challenged, will not let the challenger come off so *easily*. He cannot, in real honour, now, make proposals for qualifying; or accept of them, if made to him. And is not Monday the next day but one?—Only *that* day between, for which I have been preparing my grateful heart to return my silent praises to the Almighty, in the place dedicated to his honour, for so signal a deliverance! And now is my safety to be owing, as it may happen, to a much better person's destruction!

* *

I was obliged to lay down my pen.—See how the blistered paper—It is too late to send away this letter: if it were not, it would be barbarous to torment you with it, while the dreadful suspense holds.

Sunday morning.

I am unable to write on in the manner I used to do. Not a moment all the night past did I close my eyes: how they are swelled with weeping! I am preparing, however, to go to church: there will I renew my fervent prayers, that my grateful thanksgiving for the past deliverance may be blessed to me in the future event!

Mr. Reeves thinks, that no step ought to be, or can be taken in this shocking affair, till Sir Charles returns, or Miss Grandison can be consulted. He has taken measures to know every motion of the vile Sir Hargrave.

Lord bless me, my dear! the man has lost three of

his fore-teeth! A man so vain of his person! O how must he be exasperated!

Mr. Reeves also will be informed of Sir Charles's arrival the moment he comes to town. He has private information that the furious Sir Hargrave has with him a man skilled in the science of offence, with whom he is practising—O my dear, how this distracts me!

For Mr. Reeves or me to answer this Bagenhall, Mr. Reeves says, is not to be thought of, as he is a wicked man, and was not likely to have written the alarming letter from good principles. I once indeed proposed to write—I knew not what to do, what to propose—Can you write, said Mr. Reeves, and promise or give hope to Sir Hargrave?

O no, no! answered I.

If you could, it is my opinion, that Sir Charles and his sister would both despise you, however self-denying and laudable your motive might be.

LETTER XXXIX.

MISS BYRON. IN CONTINUATION.

Monday morning, February 27.

WHAT a dreadful day was yesterday to me; and what a still worse night had I, if possible, than the former! My prayers, I doubt, cannot be heard, since they have not that affiance with them that they used to be attended with. How happy was I before I came to London! I cannot write: I cannot do any-thing. Mr. Reeves is just informed, that Sir Charles and Lord L. and the two sisters, arrived in town late last night. O my Lucy, to return such

an answer, I doubt, as Sir Charles thinks a gentleman ought to send. Good heaven! how will this end?

Eight o'clock.

I have received this moment the following billet.

MY DEAR HARRIET,

Prepare yourself for a new admirer: my sister L. and I are resolved to breakfast with you, unless you forbid us by the bearer. If we find you to have made an attempt to alter your usual morning appearance, we shall suspect you of a desire to triumph over us in the consciousness of your superior graces. It is a sudden resolution. You should otherwise have had notice last night; and yet it was late before we came to town.—Have you been good? Are you quite recovered? But in half an hour I hope to ask you an hundred thousand questions.

Compliments to our cousins.

CH. GR.

Here is a sweet sprightly billet. Miss Grandison cannot know, the countess cannot know, any-thing of the dreadful affair, that has given to my countenance, and I am sure will continue on it, an appearance, that, did I not always dress when I arose for the morning, would make me regardless of *that* Miss Grandison hints at.

What joy, at another time, would the honour of this visit have given us! But even now, we have a melancholy pleasure in it: just such a one, as the sorrowing friends of the desperate sick experience, on the coming-in of a long-expected physician, although they are in a manner hopeless of his success. But a coach stops—

I ran to the dining-room window. O my dear! It is a coach! but only the two ladies! Good God! —Sir Charles at this moment, at this moment, my boding heart tells me—

Twelve o'clock.

My heart is a little lighter: yet not unapprehensive—Take my narrative in course, as I shall endeavour to give you the particulars of every-thing that passed in the last more than agreeable three hours.

I had just got down into the great parlour, before the ladies entered. Mr. Reeves waited on them at their coach. He handed in the countess. Miss Grandison in a charming humour entered with them. There, Lady L. first know our cousin Reeves, said she—

The countess, after saluting Mrs. Reeves, turned to me—There, Lady L. said Miss Grandison, That's the girl! That's our Harriet! [Her ladyship saluted me] But how now! said Miss Grandison, looking earnestly in my face. How now, Harriet!—Excuse me, Lady L. (taking my hand) I must reckon with this girl; leading me to the window—How now, Harriet!—Those eyes!—Mr. Reeves, cousin, Mrs. Reeves! What's to do here!

Lively and ever amiable Miss Grandison, thought I, how will, by-and-by, all this sweet sun-shine in your countenance be shut in!

Come, come, I *will* know, proceeded she, making me sit down, and taking my hand as she sat by me; I *will* know the whole of the matter.—That's my dear, for I tried to smile—An April eye—Would to heaven the month was come which my Harriet's eye anticipates.

I sighed. Well, but why that heavy sigh? said she.—Our grandmother Shirley—

I hope, madam, is very well.

Our aunt Selby? Our uncle Selby? Our Lucy?

All well I hope.

What a deuce ails the girls then? Take care I

don't have cause to beat you!—Have any of your fellows hanged themselves?—And are you concerned they did not sooner find the rope?—But come, we will know all by-and-by.

Charlotte, said Lady L. approaching me [I stood up] you oppress our new sister: I wish, my dear, you would borrow a few of our younger sister's blushes. Let me take you out of this lively girl's hands: I have much ado to keep her down, though I am her elder sister. Nobody but my brother can manage her.

Miss Grandison, madam, is all goodness.

We have been all disturbed, said Mrs. Reeves [I was glad to be helped out] in the fear that Sir Hargrave Pollexfen—

O madam! He dare not; he will not:—he'll be glad to be quiet, if you'll let him, said the countess.

It was plain they knew nothing of the challenge.

You have not heard any-thing particular, asked Miss Grandison, of Sir Hargrave?

I hope your *brother*, madam, has not, answered I.

Not a word, I dare say.

You must believe, ladies, said I, that I must be greatly affected, were any-thing likely to happen to my deliverer; as I should have been the unhappy cause. Such a family harmony to be interrupted—

Come, said Miss Grandison, this is very good of you: this is like a sister: but I hope my brother will be here by-and-by.

And Lord L. added the obliging countess, wants to see you, my dear. Come, Miss Byron, if Charlotte is naught, we will make a party against her; and she shall be but my second-best sister. I hope, my lord and Sir Charles will come together, if they can but shake off wicked Everard, as we call a kinsman, whom Sir Charles has no mind to introduce to you, without your leave.

But we'll not stay breakfast for them, said Miss Grandison: they were not certain: and *desired* we would not.—Come, come, get us some breakfast; Lady L. has been up before her hour; and I have told you, Harriet, that I am an early riser. I don't choose to eat my gloves.—But I must do something to divert my hunger: and stepping to the harpsichord, she touched the keys in such a manner, as shewed she could make them speak what language she pleased.

I attended to her charming finger: so did every one. But breakfast coming in—No but I won't, said she, anticipating our requests; and continuing the air by her voice, ran to the table: Hang ceremony, said she, sitting down first; let slower souls compliment: and taking some muffin, I'll have breakfasted before these *Pray madams*, and *Pray my dears*, are seated.

Mad girl! Lady L. called her. These, Mrs. Reeves, are always her airs with us: but I thought she would have been restrained by the example of her sister Harriet. We have utterly spoiled the girl by our fond indulgence. But, Charlotte, is a good heart to be *every where* pleaded for a whimsical head?

Who sees not the elder sister in that speech? replied Miss Grandison: but I am the most generous creature breathing; yet nobody finds it out. For why do I assume these silly airs, but to make *you*, Lady L. shine at my expence?

Still, Lucy, the contents of that Bagenhall's letter hung heavy at my heart. But as I could not be sure but Sir Charles had his reasons for concealing the matter from his sisters, I knew not how to enter directly into the subject: but, thought I, cannot I fish something out for the quiet of my own heart; and leave to Sir Charles's discretion the manner of his revealing the matter to his sisters, or otherwise?

Did your ladyship, said I to Lady L. arrive on Saturday [I knew not how to begin] at the hospitable house at Colnebrook, my asylum?

I did: and shall have a greater value for that house than ever I had before, for its having afforded a shelter to so valued a lady.

You have been told, ladies, I suppose, of that Wilson's letter to Sir Charles?

We have: and rejoice to find that so deep a plot was so happily frustrated.

His postscript gives me concern.

What were the contents of it?

That Sir Hargrave breathed nothing but revenge.

Sir Charles told us nothing of that: but it is not unlikely that a man so greatly disappointed should rave and threaten. I am told that he is still, either by shame, or illness, confined to his chamber.

At that moment, a chariot stopt at the door: and instantly, It is Lord L. and Sir Charles with him, said Miss Grandison.

I dared not to trust myself with my joy. I hurried out at one of the doors, as if I had forgot something, as they entered at the other. I rushed into the back parlour—Thank God! thank God! said I—My gratitude was too strong for my heart: I thought I should have fainted.

Do you wonder, Lucy, at my being so much affected, when I had been in such a dreadful suspense, and had formed such terrible ideas of the danger of one of the best of men, all owing to his serving and saving me?

Surprises from joy, I fancy, and where gratitude is the principal spring, are sooner recovered from than surprises which raise the more stormy passions. Mrs. Reeves came in to me: My dear! your withdrawing will be noticed. I was just coming in, said I: and so I was. I went in.

Sir Charles bowed low to me: so did my lord.

Permit me, madam, said Sir Charles, to present Lord L. to you: he is our brother—Our late-found sister Harriet, my lord.

Sir Charles, said Miss Grandison, Miss Byron, and Mr. and Mrs. Reeves, have been tormenting themselves about a postscript to that footman's letter. You told not us of that postscript.

Who minds postscripts, Charlotte? Except indeed to a lady's letter. One word with you, good Miss Byron; taking my hand, and leading me to the window.

How the fool coloured! I could feel my face glow.

O Lucy! What a consciousness of inferiority fills a mind not ungenerous, when it labours under the sense of obligations it cannot return!

My sister Charlotte, madam, was impatient to present to you her beloved sister. Lady L. was as impatient to attend you. My Lord L. was equally desirous to claim the honour of your acquaintance. They insisted upon my introducing my lord. I thought it was too precipitate a visit, and might hurt your delicacy, and make Charlotte and me appear, as if we had been ostentatiously boasting of the opportunities that had been thrown into our hands, to do a very common service. I think I see that you are hurt. Forgive me, madam, I will follow my own judgment another time. Only be assured of this, that your merits, and not the service, have drawn this visit upon you.

I could not be displeased at this polite address, as it helped me to an excuse for behaving so like a fool, as he might think, since he knew not the cause.

You are very obliging, Sir. My Lord and Lady L. do me great honour. Miss Grandison cannot do any-thing but what is agreeable to me. In such company, I am but a common person; but my gratitude will never let me look upon your seasonable

protection as a common service. I am only anxious for the consequences to yourself. I should have no pretence to the gratitude I speak of, if I did not own, that the reported threatenings, and what Wilson writes by way of postscript, have given me disturbance, lest your safety should, on my account, be brought into hazard.

Miss Byron speaks like herself: but whatever were to be the consequences, can you think, madam, that a man of any spirit could have acted otherwise than I did? Would I not have been glad, that any man would have done just the same thing, in favour of my sister Charlotte? Could I behave with greater moderation? I am pleased with myself on looking back; and that I am not always: there shall no consequences follow, that I am not forced upon in my own necessary defence.

We spoke loud enough to be heard: and Miss Grandison, joining us, said, But pray, brother, tell us, if there be grounds to apprehend any-thing from what the footman writes?

You cannot imagine but Sir Hargrave would bluster and threaten: to lose such a prize, so near as he thought himself to carrying his point, must affect a man of his cast: but are ladies to be troubled with *words?* Men of true courage do not threaten.

Shall I beg one word with you, Sir Charles? said Mr. Reeves.

They withdrew to the back parlour: and there Mr. Reeves, who had the letter of that Bagenhall, shewed it to him.

He read it—A very extraordinary letter! said he; and gave it back to him—But pray, what says Miss Byron to it?—Is *she* willing to take this step in consideration of my safety?

You may believe, Sir Charles, she is greatly distressed.

As a tender-hearted woman, and as one who thinks already much too highly of what was done, she *may* be distressed: but does she hesitate a moment upon the part she ought to take? Does she not despise the writer and the writing?—I thought Miss Byron—

He stopt, it seems, and spoke and looked warm; the first time, said Mr. Reeves, that I thought Sir Charles, on occasion, passionate.

I wish, Lucy, that he had not stopt, I wish he had said what he thought Miss Byron. I own to you, that it would go to my heart, if I knew that Sir Charles Grandison thought me a mean creature.

You must think, Sir Charles, that Miss Byron—

Pray, Mr. Reeves, forgive me for interrupting you; What steps have been taken upon this letter?

None, Sir.

It has *not* been honoured with notice; not with the *least* notice?

It has not.

And could it be supposed by these mean men (all men are mean, Mr. Reeves, who can be *premeditatedly* guilty of a baseness) that I would be brought to ask pardon for my part in this affair? No man, Mr. Reeves, would be more ready than myself to ask pardon, even of my inferior, had I done a wrong thing: but never should a *prince* make me stoop to disavow a right one.

But, Sir Charles, let me ask you, Has Sir Hargrave challenged you? Did this Bagenhall bring you a letter?

Sir Hargrave has: Bagenhall did: but what of that, Mr. Reeves? I promised an answer on Monday. I would not so much as think of setting pen to paper on such an account, to interrupt for a moment the happiness I had hoped to receive in the

meeting of a sister and her lord, so dear to me: an answer I have accordingly sent him this day.

You *have* sent him an answer, Sir!—I am in great apprehensions—

You have no reason, Mr. Reeves, I do assure you. But let not my sisters, nor Lord L. know of this matter. Why should I, who cannot have a moment's uneasiness upon it, for *my own* sake, have the needless fears and apprehensions of persons to whom I wish to give nothing but pleasure, to contend with? An imaginary distress, to those who think it more than imaginary, is a real one: and I cannot bear to see my friends unhappy.

Have you accepted, Sir—Have you—

I have been too much engaged, Mr. Reeves, in such causes as this: I never drew my sword but in my own defence, and when no other means could defend me. I never could bear a designed insult. I am naturally passionate. You know not the pains it has cost me, to keep my passion under: but I have suffered too much in my after-regret, when I have been hurried away by it, not to endeavour to restrain its first sallies.

I hope, Sir, you will not meet—

I will not meet any man, Mr. Reeves, as a duellist: I am not so much a coward, as to be afraid of being branded for one. I hope my spirit is in general too well known for any one to insult me on such an imputation. Forgive the seeming vanity, Mr. Reeves: but I live not to the world: I live to myself; to the monitor within me.

Mr. Reeves applauded him with his hands and eyes; but could not in words. The *heart* spoke these last words, said my good cousin. How did his face seem to shine in my eyes!

There are many bad customs, Mr. Reeves, that I

grieve for: but for none so much as this of premeditated duelling. Where is the magnanimity of the man that cannot get above the vulgar breath? How many fatherless, brotherless, sonless families have mourned all their lives the unhappy resort to this dreadful practice! A man who defies his fellow-creature into the field, in a private quarrel, must first defy his God; and what are his *hopes*, but to be a murderer; to do an irreparable injury to the innocent family and dependents of the murdered?—But since you have been let into the matter so far, by the unaccountable letter you let me see, I will shew you Sir Hargrave's to me.—This is it, taking it out of his pocket-book.

You did well, Sir Charles Grandison, to leave your name. My scoundrels were too far off their master to inform themselves, who the person was that insulted an innocent man (as to *him*, innocent, however) on the highway. You *expected* to hear from me, it is evident; and you should have heard before now, had I been able from the effects of the unmanly surprise you took advantage of, to leave my chamber. I demand from you the satisfaction due to a gentleman. The time your own; provided it exceed not next Wednesday; which will give you opportunity, I suppose, to settle your affairs; but the sooner the better. The place, if you have no objection, Kensington Gravel-pits. I will bring pistols for your choice; or you may for mine, which you will. The rest may be left to my worthy friend Mr. Bagenhall, who is so kind as to carry you this, on my part; and to some one whom you shall pitch upon, on yours. Till when, I am

Your humble servant,

Saturday HARGRAVE POLLEXFEN.

I have a copy of my answer somewhere—Here it is. You will wonder, perhaps, Mr. Reeves, on such a subject as this, to find it a long one. Had Sir Hargrave known me better than he does, six lines might have been sufficient.

SIR,

Mr. Bagenhall gave me yours on Saturday last, just as I was stepping into my chariot to go out of town. Neither the general contents, nor the time mentioned in it, made it necessary for me to alter my measures. My sister was already in the chariot. I had not done well to make a woman uneasy. I have many friends; and I have great *pleasure* in promoting *theirs*. I promised an answer on Monday.

My answer is this—I have ever refused (and the occasion has happened too often) to draw my sword upon a set and formal challenge. Yet I have reason to think, from the skill I pretend to have in the weapons, that in declining to do so, I consult my conscience rather than my safety.

Have you any friends, Sir Hargrave? Do they love you? Do you love them? Are you desirous of life for their sakes? for your own?—Have you enemies to whom your untimely end would give pleasure?—Let these considerations weigh with you; they do, and always did, with me. I am cool: you cannot be so. The cool person, on such an occasion as this, should put the warm one on thinking: this however as you please.

But one more question let me ask you—If you think I have injured you, is it prudent to give me a chance, were it *but* a chance, to do you a still greater injury?

You were engaged in an unlawful enterprise. If you would not have done by me in the same situation, what I did by you, you are not, let me tell

you, Sir Hargrave, the man of honour, that a man of honour should be solicitous to put upon a foot with himself.

I took not an unmanly advantage of you, Sir Hargrave: you drew upon me: I drew not in return. You had a disadvantage in not quitting your chariot; after the lunge you made at me, you may be thankful that I made not use of it.

I should not have been sorry, had I been able to give the lady the protection she claimed, with less hurt to yourself: for I could have no malice in what I did: although I had, and have still, a just abhorrence of the violence you were guilty of to a helpless woman; and who I have found since merited better treatment from you; and indeed merits the best from all the world; and whose life was endangered by the violence.

I write a long letter, because I propose *only* to write. Pardon me for repeating, that the men who have acted as you and I have acted, as well with regard to the lady, as to *each other*, cannot, were their principles such as would permit them to meet, meet upon a foot.

Let any man insult me upon my refusal, and put me upon my defence, and he shall find that numbers to my single arm shall not intimidate me. Yet, even in *that* case, I would much rather choose to clear myself of them as a man of honour should wish to do, than either to kill or maim any man. My life is not my own: much less is another man's mine. Him who thinks differently from me, I can despise as heartily as he can despise me. And if such a one imagines, that he has a title to my life, let him take it: but it must be in my own way, not in his.

In a word, If any man has aught against me, and will not apply for redress to the laws of his country, my goings out, and comings in, are always known;

and I am any hour of the day to be found, or met with, wherever I have a proper call. My sword is a sword of defence, not of offence. A pistol I only carry on the road, to terrify robbers: and I have found a less dangerous weapon sometimes sufficient to repel a sudden insult. And now, if Sir Hargrave Pollexfen be wise, he will think himself obliged for this not unfriendly expostulation, or whatever he pleases to call it, to

His most humble servant,

Monday. CHARLES GRANDISON.

Mr. Reeves besought Sir Charles to let him shew me these letters. You may, Mr. Reeves, said he; since I intend not to meet Sir Hargrave in the way he prescribes.

As I asked not leave, my Lucy, to take copies of them, I beg they may not be seen out of the venerable circle.

I know I need not say how much I am pleased with the contents of the latter: I doubt not but you all will be equally so: yet, as Sir Charles himself expects not that Sir Hargrave will rest the matter here; and indeed says he cannot, consistently with the vulgar notions of honour; do you think I can be easy, as all this is to be placed to my account?

But it is evident, that Sir Charles *is*. He is governed by another set of principles, than those of false honour; and shews, what his sister says to be true, that he regards first his duty, and then what is called honour. How does the knowledge of these his excellencies raise him in my mind! Indeed, Lucy, I seem sometimes to feel, as if my gratitude had raised a throne for him in my heart; but yet as for a near friend, as a beloved brother only. My reverence for him is too great—Assure yourself, my dear, that this reverence will always keep me right.

Sir Charles and Mr. Reeves returning into company, the conversation took a general turn. But, oppressed with obligations as I am, I could not be lively. My heart, as Miss Grandison says, is, I believe, a proud one. And when I thought of what might still happen (who knows, but from assassination, in resentment of some very spirited strokes in Sir Charles's letter, as well as from the disgrace the wretch must carry in his face to the grave?) I could not but look upon this fine man who seemed to possess his own soul in peace, sometimes with concern, and even with tender grief, on supposing, that now, lively and happy as he seemed to be, and the joy of all his friends, he might possibly, and perhaps in a few hours—How can I put down my horrid thoughts!

At other times, indeed, I cast an eye of some pleasure on him (when he looked another way) on thinking him the only man on earth, to whom, in such distress, I could have wished to owe the obligations I am under to him. His modest merit, thought I, will not make one uneasy: he thinks the protection afforded but a common protection. He is accustomed to do great and generous things. I might have been obliged to a man whose fortune might have made it convenient for him to hope such advantages from the risque he run for me, as prudence would have made objections to comply with, not a little embarrassing to my gratitude.

But here, my heart is left free. And O, thought I, now-and-then, as I looked upon him, Sir Charles Grandison is a man with whom I would not *wish* to be in love. I, to have so many rivals! He, to be so much admired! Women not to stay till they are asked, as Miss Grandison once said; his heart must be proof against those tender sensations, which grow into ardour, and glow, in the bosom of a man pursuing a *first* and *only* love.

I warrant, my Lucy, if the truth were known, although Sir Charles has at Canterbury, or at one place or other, his half-score ladies, who would break their hearts if he were to marry, yet he knows not any *one* of them whom he loves better than another. And all but right! All but justice, if they will not stay till they are asked!

Miss Grandison invited Mr. and Mrs. Reeves, and me, to dinner, on Wednesday, and for the rest of the day and evening. It was a welcome invitation.

The countess expressed herself pleased with me. Poor and spiritless as was the figure which I made in this whole visit, her prepossession in my favour from Miss Grandison must have been very great and generous.

And will you not, before now, have expected that I should have brought you acquainted with the persons of Lord and Lady L. as I am accustomed to give you descriptions of every one to whom I am introduced?

To be sure we have, say you.

Well, but my mind has not always been in tune to gratify you. And, upon my word, I am so much humbled with one thing, and another, that I have lost all that pertness, I think, which used to give such a liveliness to my heart, and alertness to my pen, as made the writing task pleasant to me, because I knew that you all condescended to like the flippant airs of your Harriet.

Lady L. is a year older than Sir Charles: but has that true female softness and delicacy in her features, which make her perfectly lovely; and she looks to be two or three years younger than she is. She is tall and slender; and enjoys the blessings of health and spirits in a high degree. There is something of more dignity and sprightliness in the air and features of Miss Grandison, than in those of Lady L.: but

there is in those of the latter, so much sweetness and complacency, that you are not so much afraid of her as you are of her sister. The one you are sure to love at first sight: the other you will be ready to ask leave to let you love her; and to be ready to promise that you will, if she will spare you: and yet, whether she will or not, you cannot help it.

Lady L. is such a wife, I imagine, as a good woman should wish to be thought. The behaviour of my lord to her, and of her to my lord, is free, yet respectful; and affectionate, but not apishly fond. One sees their love for each other in their eyes. All love-matches are not happy: this was a match of love; and does honour to it. Every-body speaks of Lady L. with equal affection and respect, as a discreet and prudent woman. Miss Grandison, by her livelier manner, is not so well understood in those lights as she ought to be; and, satisfied with the worthiness of her own heart, is above giving herself concern about what the world thinks of it.

Lord L. is not handsome; but he is very agreeable. He has the look of an honest good man; and of a man of understanding. And he is what he looks to be. He is genteel, and has the air of a true British nobleman; one of those, I imagine, who would have been respected by his appearance and manners, in the purest times, a hundred or two years (or how long?) ago.

I am to have the family-history of this lord and lady, on both sides, and of their loves, their difficulties, and of the obligations they talk of being under to their brother, to whom both my lord and lady behave with love that carries the heart in every word, in every look.

What, my dear, shall we say to this brother? Does he lay every-body that knows him under obligation? And is there no way to be even with him in any one thing? I long to have some intimate con-

versation with Miss Grandison, by which I shall perhaps find out the art he has of making every-body proud of acknowledging an inferiority to him.

I almost wish I could, while I stay in town, devote half my time to this amiable family; without breaking in upon them so much as to be thought impertinent. The other half ought to be with my kind cousin Reeves's. I never shall make them amends for the trouble I have given them.

How I long for Wednesday, to see all the family of the Grandisons—They are all to be there—On several accounts I long for that day: yet this Sir Hargrave—

I have written, my dear, as usual, very unreservedly. I know that I lie more open than ever to my uncle's observations. But if he will not allow for weakness of heart, of head, and for having been frighted out of my wits and cruelly used; and for further apprehensions; and for the sense I have of obligations that never can be returned; why then I must lie wholly at his mercy—But if he should find *me* to be ever so silly a creature, I hope he will not make his particular conclusions general in disfavour of the sex.

Adieu, my dear Lucy!—And in you, adieu all the dear and revered friends, benefactors, lovers, of your

HARRIET BYRON.

LETTER XL.

MRS. SELBY TO MISS HARRIET BYRON.

MY DEAREST HARRIET, Selby-house, February 25.

ALTHOUGH we have long ago taken a resolution, never to dictate to your choice; yet we could not excuse ourselves, if we did not acquaint you with any proposal that is made to us, on your account, that you might encourage it, or otherwise, as you thought fit.

The dowager Lady D. wrote me a letter some-time ago (as you will see by the date): but insisted, that I should keep the contents a secret in my own bosom, till she gave me leave to reveal it. She has now given me that leave, and requested that I will propose the matter to you. I have since shewn what has passed between her ladyship and me, to your grandmamma, Mr. Selby, and Lucy. They are all silent upon it; for the same reasons, that I give you not my opinion; that is to say, till you ask it.

But do we not see, my dearest child, that something has happened, within a very few days past, that must distance the hope of every one of your admirers, as they come to be acquainted with the circumstances and situation you are now in? My dear love, you will never be able to resist the impulses of that gratitude which always opened and expanded your worthy heart.

Your uncle's tenderness for you, on such a prospect, has made him suppress his inclination to railly you. He professes to pity you, my dear. While, says he, the sweet girl was vaunting herself, and refusing this man; and dismissing that; and imagining herself out of the reach of the deity, to which,

sooner or later, all women bow; I spared her not: but now, that I see she is likely to be over head and ears in the passion, and has so much to be said for her excuse if she is caught; and as our side must perhaps be the hoping side, the gentleman's the triumphant; I pity her too much for what *may* be the case, to teaze her with my animadversions; especially after what she has suffered from the vile Sir Hargrave.

By several hints in your letters, it is impossible, my dear, that we *can* be aforehand with your inclinations. Young women in a beginning love are always willing to conceal themselves from themselves; they are desirous to smother the fire, before they will call out for help, till it blazes, and frequently becomes too powerful to be extinguished by *any* help. They will call the passion by another name; as, *gratitude*, suppose: but, my Harriet, gratitude so properly founded as yours is can be but another name for *love*. The object so worthy, your own heart so worthy, consent of minds must bring it to love on one side; perhaps on both, if the half-score of ladies you have heard of are all of them but *mere moderns*. But that, my dear, is not to be supposed; since worthy hearts find out, and assimilate with, each other. Indeed, those ladies may be such as are captivated with outward figure. A handsome man need not to have the great qualities of a Sir Charles Grandison, to engage the hearts of the generality of our sex. But a good man and a handsome man, if he has the vivacity that distinguishes Sir Charles, may marry whom he pleases. If we women love a handsome man, for the sake of our eye, we must be poor creatures indeed, if we love not good men, for the sake of our hearts.

What makes us apprehensive for you, my Harriet, is this: that we every one of us are in love ourselves

with this fine young gentleman. Your uncle has fallen in with Mr. Dawson, an attorney of Nottingham, who acts for Sir Charles in some of his affairs; and gives him such a character, respecting his goodness to his tenants and dependents *only*, as will render credible all that even the fondest love, and warmest gratitude, can say in his praise.

We can hardly tell sometimes how to regret (though your accounts of your sufferings and danger cut us to the heart as we read them) the base attempt of Sir Hargrave: were all to end as we wish, we should not regret it: but that, my Harriet, is our fear. What will become of me, said your grandmamma, if, at last, the darling of my heart should be entangled in a hopeless passion?

If this is likely to be the case, while the fire I spoke of is but smothering, and while but here and there a spark escapes your struggling efforts to keep it down, resolve, my dear, to throw cold water on it, and quench it quite. And how is this to be done, but by changing your personal friendship with the amiable family, into a correspondence by pen and ink, and returning to our longing arms, before the flame gets a-head?

When you are with us, you may either give hope to the worthy Orme, or encourage the proposal I inclose, as you please.

As you are not capable of the mean pride of seeing a number of men in your train, and have always been uneasy at the perseverance of Mr. Fenwick and Mr. Greville—As you have suffered so much from the natural goodness of your heart, on the urgency of that honest man Sir Rowland Meredith in his nephew's favour; and still more from the baseness of that wicked Sir Hargrave—As your good character, and lovely person, engage you more and more admirers—And, lastly, as it would be the highest

comfort that your grandmamma and your uncle, and I, and all your friends and well-wishers, could know, to see you happily married—We cannot but wish for this pleasure and satisfaction: the sooner you give it to us, the better.

But could there be any hope—You know what I mean—A royal diadem, my dear, would be a despicable thing in the comparison.

Adieu, my best love. You are called upon, in my opinion, to a greater trial than ever yet you knew, of that prudence for which you have hitherto been so much applauded by every one, and particularly by

Your truly maternal
MARIANNA SELBY.

LETTER XLI.

FROM THE COUNTESS DOWAGER OF D. TO MRS. SELBY.

[*Inclosed in the preceding.*]

January 23.

GIVE me leave, madam, to address myself to you, though personally unknown, on a very particular occasion; and, at the same time, to beg of you to keep secret, even from Mr. Selby, and the party to be named as still *more* immediately concerned in the subject, till I give my consent; as no one creature of my family, not even my son, does, or shall know from me till you approve of it.

My lord has just entered into his twenty-fifth year. There are not many better young men among the nobility. His minority gave an opportunity to me, and his other trustees, to put him in possession,

when he came of age, of a very noble and clear estate; which he has not impaired. His person is not to be found fault with. He has learning, and is allowed to have good sense, which every *learned* man has not. His conduct, his discretion, in his travels, procured him respect and reputation abroad. You may make enquiry privately of all these matters.

We are, you must believe, very solicitous to have him happily married. He is far from being an undutiful son. Indeed he was *always* dutiful. A dutiful son gives very promising hopes of making a good husband. He assures me that his affections are disengaged, and that he will pay the most particular regard to my recommendation.

I have cast about for a suitable wife for him. I look farther than to the *person* of a woman; though my lord will by no means have beauty left out in the qualifications of a wife. I look to the family to whom a lady owes her education and training up. Quality, however, I stand not upon. A man of quality, you know, confers quality on his wife. An ancient and good gentleman's family is all I am solicitous about in this respect. In this light, yours, madam, on all sides, and for many descents, is unexceptionable. I have a desire, if all things shall be found to be mutually agreeable, to be related to it: and your character, as the young lady has been brought up under your eye, is a great inducement with me.

Your niece Byron's beauty, and merits, as well as sweetness of temper, are talked of by every-body. Not a day passes, but we hear of her to her great advantage. Now, madam, will you be pleased to answer me one question, with that explicitness which the importance of the case, and my own intended explicitness to you, may require from woman to woman? Especially, as I ask it of you in confidence.

Are then Miss Byron's affections absolutely disengaged? We are very nice, and must not doubt in this matter.

This is the only question I will ask at present. If this can be answered as I wish, others, in a treaty of this important nature, will come into consideration on both sides.

The favour of a line, as soon as it will suit your convenience, will oblige, madam,

Your most faithful and obedient servant,

M. D.

LETTER XLII.

MRS. SELBY TO THE COUNTESS DOWAGER OF D.

MADAM, January 27.

I AM greatly obliged to your ladyship for your good opinion of me, and for the honour you do me, and all our family, in the proposed alliance.

I will answer your ladyship's question with the requisite explicitness.

Mr. Greville, Mr. Orme, and Mr. Fenwick, all of this county, have respectively made application to us for our interest, and to Miss Byron for her favour: but hitherto without effect; though the terms each proposes might intitle him to consideration.

Miss Byron professes to honour the married state, and one day proposes to make some man happy in it, if it be not his own fault: but declares, that she has not yet seen the man to whom with her hand she can give her heart.

In truth, madam, we are all neutral on this occasion. We have the highest opinion of her discretion. She has read, she has conversed; and yet there

is not in the county one who would make a more prudent manager in a family. We are all fond of her even to doting. Were she not our child, we should love her for her good qualities, and sweetness of manners, and a frankness that has few examples among young women.

Permit me, madam, to add one thing; about which Miss Byron, in her turn, will be very nice. Your ladyship is pleased to say, that my lord's affections are disengaged. Were his lordship a prince, and hoped to succeed with her, they must not be so, after he had seen and conversed with her. Yet the future happiness, and not pride, would be the consideration with her; for she has that diffidence in her own merits, from which the worthy of both sexes cannot be totally free. This diffidence would increase too much for her happiness, were she to be thought of with indifference by any man on earth, who hoped to be more than indifferent to *her*.

As to other questions, which, as this is answered, your ladyship thinks may come to be asked. I choose *un*-asked (having no reserves) to acquaint your ladyship that Miss Byron has not, in her own power, quite 15,000l. She has, it is true, reversionary expectations: but we none of us wish that they should for many years take place; since that must be by the death of Mrs. Shirley, her grandmother, who is equally revered and beloved by all that know her; and whose life is bound up in the happiness of her grand-daughter.

I will strictly obey your ladyship in the secrecy enjoined; and am, madam,

Your ladyship's obliged and faithful humble servant,

MARIANNA SELBY.

LETTER XLIII.

FROM THE COUNTESS DOWAGER OF D. TO MRS. SELBY.

February 23.

I SHOULD sooner have answered yours, had I not waited for the return of my son, who had taken a little journey into Wales, to look into the condition of a small estate he has there, which he finds capable of great improvement; and about which he has given proper orders.

I took the first opportunity to question him in relation to his inclinations to marriage, and whether he had a regard to any particular woman: and having received an answer to my wishes, I mentioned Miss Byron to him, as a young lady that I should think, from the general good character she bore, would make him an excellent wife.

He said, he had heard her much talked of, and always to her advantage. I then shewed him, as in confidence, my letter, and your answer. There can be, said I, (on purpose to try him) but one objection on your part; and that is fortune: 15,000l. to a nobleman, who is possessed of 12,000l. a year, and has been offered four times the portion, may be thought very inadequate. The less to be stood upon, replied he, where the fortune on my side is so considerable. The very answer, my dear Mrs. Selby, that I wished him to make.

I asked him, if I should begin a formal treaty with you, upon what he said. He answered, that he had heard from every mouth, so much said in praise of Miss Byron's mind, as well as person, that he desired I would; and that I would directly endeavour to obtain leave for him to visit the young lady.

I propose it accordingly. I understand, that she is at present in London. I leave it to your choice, madam, and Mrs. Shirley's, and Mr. Selby's (to whom now, as also to Miss Byron, you will be so good as to communicate the affair) whether you will send for her down to receive my lord's visit and mine; or whether we shall wait on her in town.

I propose very high satisfaction to myself, if the young people approve of each other, in an alliance so much to my wishes in every respect. I shall love the Countess of D. as well as any of you can do Miss Byron: and as she has not at present a mother, I shall with pleasure supply that tender relation to her, for the sake of so many engaging qualities, as common fame, as well as good Mrs. Selby, says she is mistress of.

You will dispatch an answer as to the interview. I am impatient for it. I depend much upon the frankness of the young lady, which you make a part of her agreeable character. And am, madam,

Your affectionate and faithful humble servant,

M. D.

LETTER XLIV.

MISS BYRON TO MRS. SELBY.

London, February 28.

INDEED, my dear and ever indulgent aunt Selby, you have given me pain; and yet I am very ungrateful, I believe, to say so: but if I feel the pain (though perhaps I ought not) should I not own it?

What *circumstances*, what *situation*, am I in, madam, that I cannot be mistress of myself? That shall turn my uncle's half-feared, though always agreeable raillery into *pity* for me?

"Over head and ears in the passion"—"I to be on the hoping side; the gentleman on the triumphant"—"It is impossible for you, my friends, to be aforehand with my inclinations"—"A beginning love to be mentioned, in which one is willing to conceal one's self from one's self!" *Fires, flames, blazes*, to follow!—*Gratitude* and *love* to be spoken of as synonymous terms—Ah! my dear aunt, how could you let my uncle write such a letter, and then copy it, and send it to me as yours?

And yet some very tender strokes are in it, that no *man*, that hardly any-body but you among *women*, could write.

But what do you *do*, madam, when you tell your Harriet of your own prepossessions in favour of a man who, as you thought, had before in my eye too many advantages? Indeed you should have taken care not to let me know, that his great qualities had impressed you all so deeply: and my grandmamma to be so *very* apprehensive too for the *entangled girl!*

Hopeless passion, said she? *Entangled in a hopeless passion!* O let me die before this shall be deserved to be said of your Harriet!

Then again rises to your pen, *smothering* and *escaped sparks;* and I am desired to hurry myself to get *cold water* to quench the *flame*—Dear, dear madam, what images are here? And applied—To whom?—And by whom?—Have I written any-thing so *very* blazing?—Surely I have not. But you should not say you will all forgive me, if this be my sad situation. You should not say, how much you are *yourselves, all of you*, in love with this excellent man; and talk of Mr. Dawson, and of what he says of him: but you should have told me, that if I suffer my gratitude to grow into love, you will never forgive me; then should I have had a call of duty to check or controul a passion, that you were afraid could not be gratified.

Well, and there is no way left for me, it seems, but to fly for it! To hurry away to Northamptonshire, and either to begin a new treaty with Lord D. or to give hope to an old lover. Poor Harriet Byron! And is it indeed so bad with thee? And does thy aunt Selby think it is?

But is there no hope, that the man will take *pity* of thee? When he sees thee so sadly *entangled*, will he not vouchsafe to lend an extricating hand?

Oh, no—Too much obliged, as thou already art, how canst thou expect to be farther obliged? Obliged in the highest degree?

But let me try if I cannot play round this bright, this beamy taper, without singeing my wings! I fancy it is not yet *quite* so bad with me! At least, let me stand this one visit of to-morrow: and then if I find reason to think I cannot stand it, I will take the kind advice, and fly for it; rather than add another hopeless girl to the half-score that perhaps have been long sighing for this best of men.

But even then, my aunt, that is to say, were I to fly, and take shelter under your protecting wings, I shall not, I hope, think it *absolutely* necessary to light up one flame, in order to extinguish another. I shall always value Mr. Orme as a friend; but indeed I am less than ever inclined to think of him in a nearer light.

As to Lady D.'s proposal, it admits not with me of half a thought. You know, my dearest aunt, that I am not yet *rejected* by one with whom you are all in love—But this *seriously* I will own (and yet I hope nothing but my gratitude is engaged, and that indeed is a very powerful tie) that since I have seen and known Sir Charles Grandison, I have not only (as before) an *indifference*, but a *dislike*, to all other men. And I think, if I know my own heart, I had rather converse but an hour in a week with him, and with Miss Grandison, than be the wife of any man I have ever seen or known.

If this should end at last in love, and if I should be *entangled in a hopeless passion*, the object of it would be Sir Charles Grandison: he could not insult me; and mean, as the word *pity* in some cases sounds, I had rather have his pity, than the love of any other man.

You will, upon the strength of what I have said, be so good, dear madam, as to let the Countess of D. know, that I think myself highly obliged to her, for her favourable opinion of me: that she has by it interested all my good wishes in her son's happiness; and that I was always of opinion, that equality of fortune and degree, though not absolutely necessary to matrimonial felicity, was however a circumstance not to be slighted: but you, madam, can put my meaning in better, in fitter words, when you are assured, that it *is* my meaning. to give an absolute, though grateful, negative to this proposal. And I do assure you that such *is* my meaning; and that I should despise myself, were I capable of keeping one man in suspense, even had I hope of *your* hope, while I was balancing in favour of another.

I believe, madam, I have been a little petulant, and very saucy, in what I have written: but my heart is not at ease: and I am vexed with these men, one after another, when Sir Hargrave has given me a surfeit of them; and only that the bad has brought me into the knowledge of the best, or I could resolve never more to hear a man talk to me, no not for one moment, upon a subject, that is become so justly painful to one who never took pleasure in their airy adulation.

I know you will, with your usual goodness, and so will my grandmamma, and so will my uncle Selby, pardon all the imperfections of, dearest madam,

Your and their ever dutiful

HARRIET BYRON.

LETTER XLV.

MISS BYRON TO MISS SELBY.

Tuesday evening, February 28.

Mr. Reeves, my dear, is just returned from a visit he made in St. James's Square. I transcribe a paper giving an account of what passed between Mr. Bagenhall and Sir Charles in relation to the shocking affair which has filled me with so much apprehension; and which Sir Charles, at my cousin's request, allowed him to put in his pocket.

Mr. Bagenhall came to Sir Charles yesterday evening with a message from Sir Hargrave, demanding a meeting with him, the next morning, at a particular hour, at Kensington Gravel-pits. Sir Charles took Mr. Bagenhall with him into his study; and, asking him to sit down, Mr. Bagenhall said, That he was once concerned in an affair of this nature, which had been very much misrepresented afterwards; and that he had been advised to take a step which Sir Charles might think extraordinary; which was, that he had brought with him a young gentleman, whom he hoped, for Sir Hargrave's satisfaction, as well as to do justice to what should pass between them, Sir Charles would permit to take minutes of their conversation: and that he was in the hall.

Let not a gentleman be left in the hall, said Sir Charles; and, ringing, directed him to be shewn into the study to them. Yet, Mr. Bagenhall, said he, I see no occasion for this. Our conversation on the subject you come to talk of, *can* be but short.

Were it to hold but two minutes, Sir Charles—

What you please, Mr. Bagenhall.

The young gentleman entered; and pen and ink were set before him. He wrote in short hand; and

read it to the gentlemen; and Sir Charles, as it was to be transcribed for Sir Hargrave, desiring a copy of it, it was sent him the same night.

A CONFERENCE BETWEEN SIR CHARLES GRANDISON, BART. AND JAMES BAGENHALL, ESQ.

Sir Ch. You have told me, Mr. Bagenhall, Sir Hargrave's demand. Have you seen, Sir, the answer I returned to his letter?

Mr. Bagenhall. I have, Sir.

Sir Ch. And do you think, there needs any other, or further?

Mr. B. It is not, Sir Charles, such an answer as a gentleman can sit down with.

Sir Ch. Do you give that as *your own* opinion, Mr. Bagenhall? Or, as Sir Hargrave's?

Mr. B. As Sir Hargrave's, Sir. And I believe it would be the opinion of every man of honour.

Sir Ch. Man of honour! Mr. Bagenhall. A man of honour would not have given the occasion which has brought you and me, Sir, into a personal knowledge of each other. I asked the question, supposing there could be but *one* principal in this debate.

Mr. B. I beg pardon: I meant not that there should be *two*.

Sir Ch. Pray, Sir, let me ask you, Do you know the particulars of Sir Hargrave's attempt, and of his violence to the lady?

Mr. B. Sir Hargrave, I believe, has given me a very exact account of every-thing. He meant not dishonour to the lady.

Sir Ch. He must have a very high opinion of himself, if he thought the *best* he could do for her, would be to do her honour—Sir, pray put that down.—Repeating what he said to the writer, that he might not mistake.

Sir Ch. But do you, Mr. Bagenhall, think Sir Hargrave was justifiable, as a man of honour, in what he did?

Mr. B. I mean not, as I told you, Sir Charles, to make myself a principal in this affair. I pretend not to justify what Sir Hargrave did to the lady.

Sir Ch. I hope then you will allow me to refer to my answer to Sir Hargrave's letter. I shall send him no other. I beg your pardon, Mr. Bagenhall, I mean not a disrespect to you.

Mr. B. No *other*, Sir Charles?

Sir Ch. Since he is to see what this gentleman writes, pray put down, Sir, that I say, The answer I have written, is such a one as he ought to be satisfied with: such a one as becomes a man of honour to send, if he thought fit to send *any:* and such a one as a man who has acted as Sir Hargrave acted by a woman of virtue and honour, ought to be thankful for.—Have you written that, Sir?

Writer. I have, Sir.

Sir Ch. Write further, if you please; That I say, Sir Hargrave may be very glad, if he hear no more of this affair from the lady's natural friends: that, however, I shall rid him of all apprehensions of that nature; for that I still consider the lady as under my protection, with regard to any consequences that may naturally follow what happened on Hounslow-heath; That I say, I shall neglect no proper call to protect her farther; but that his call upon me to meet him, must be such a one as my own heart can justify; and that it is not my way to obey the insolent summons of any man breathing.—And yet, what is this, Mr. Bagenhall, but repeating what I wrote?

Mr. B. You are warm, Sir Charles.

Sir Ch. Indeed I am not: I am only earnest. As

Sir Hargrave is to be shewn what passes, I say more than otherwise I should choose to say.

Mr. B. Will you name your own time and place, Sir Charles?

Sir Ch. To do what?

Mr. B. To meet Sir Hargrave.

Sir Ch. To do him good—To do good to my bitterest enemy, I would meet him. Let him know, that I wrote a very long letter, because I would discharge my mind of all that I thought necessary to say on the occasion.

Mr. B. And you have no other answer to return?

Sir Ch. Only this—Let Sir Hargrave engage himself in a like unworthy enterprize; and let the lady, as this did, claim my protection; and I will endeavour to give it to her, although Sir Hargrave were surrounded by as many men armed, as he has in his service; that is to say, if a legal redress were not at hand: if it were, I hold it not to be a point of bravery to insult magistracy, and to take upon myself to be my own judge; and, as it might happen, another man's executioner.

Mr. B. This is nobly said, Sir Charles: but still Sir Hargrave had not injured *you*, he says. And as I had heard you were a man of an excellent character, and know Sir Hargrave to be a man of courage, I took it into my head, for the prevention of mischief, to make a proposal in writing to the lady, whom Sir Hargrave loves as his own soul; and if she had come into it—

Sir Ch. A strange proposal, Mr. Bagenhall. Could you expect any-thing from it?

Mr. B. Why not, Sir Charles? She is disengaged, it seems. I presume, Sir, you do not intend to make court to her yourself?

Sir Ch. We are insensibly got into a parley, upon a subject that will not bear it, Mr. Bagenhall. Tell

Sir Hargrave—or, write it down from my lips, Sir (speaking to the writer) that I wish him to take time to enquire after my character, and after my motives in refusing to meet him on the terms he expects me to see him. Tell him, that I have, before now, shewn an insolent man, that I *may be* provoked: but that, when I have been so, I have had the happiness to chastise such a one without murdering him, and without giving any advantage over my own life, to his single arm.

Mr. B. This is great talking, Sir Charles.

Sir Ch. It is, Mr. Bagenhall. And I should be sorry to have been put upon it, were I not in hope, that it may lead Sir Hargrave to such enquiries as may be for *his* service as much as for *mine.*

Mr. B. I wish, that two such spirits were better acquainted with each other, or that Sir Hargrave had not suffered so much as he has done, both in person and mind.

Sir Ch. What does all this tend to, Mr. Bagenhall? I look upon you as a gentleman; and the more, for having said, you were solicitous to prevent further mischief, or I should not have said so much to so little purpose. And once more, I must refer to my letter.

Mr. B. I own I admire you for your spirit, Sir. But it is amazing to me, that a man of such spirit can refuse to a gentleman the satisfaction which is demanded of him.

Sir Ch. It is owing to my having some spirit, that I can, fearless of consequences, refuse what you call satisfaction to Sir Hargrave, and yet be fearless of insult upon my refusal. I consider myself as a mortal man: I can die but once: once I must die: and if the cause be such as will justify me to my own heart, I, *for my own sake*, care not whether my life be demanded of me to-morrow, or forty years hence: but, Sir (speaking to the writer) let not

this, that I have now said, be transcribed from your notes: it may to Sir Hargrave sound ostentatiously. I want not, that any-thing should be read or shewn to him, that would appear like giving consequence to myself, except for Sir Hargrave's own sake.

Mr. B. I beg, that it may not be spared. If you are capable of acting as you speak; by what I have heard *of* you in the affair on Hounslow-heath; and by what I have heard *from* you in this conversation; and *see* of you; I think you a wonder of a man, and should be glad it were in my power to reconcile you to each other.

Sir Ch. I could not hold friendship, Mr. Bagenhall, with a man that has been capable of acting as Sir Hargrave has acted, by an innocent and helpless young lady. But I will name the terms on which I can take by the hand, wherever I meet him, a man to whom I can have no malice: these are they, That he lay at the door of mad and violent passion the illegal attempt he made on the best of women: that he express his sorrow for it; and, on his knees, if he pleases (it is no disgrace to the *proudest* man to kneel to an injured lady) beg her pardon; and confess her clemency to be greater than he deserves, if she give it.

Mr. B. Good God!—Shall that be transcribed, Sir Charles?

Sir Ch. By all means: and if Sir Hargrave is a man that has in his heart the least spark of true magnanimity, he will glady embrace the opportunity of acting accordingly: and put down, Sir, that sorrow, that contrition, is all the atonement that can be made for a perpetrated evil.

A faithful narrative. HENRY COTES.

February 27.

Does not your heart glow, my Lucy, now you have read (as I suppose you have) this paper? And do not the countenances of every one of my revered friends round you [pray look!] shine with admiration of this excellent man? And yet you all loved him before: and so you think I did. Well, I can't help your thoughts!—But I hope I shall not be undone by a *good* man!

You will imagine, that my heart was a little agitated, when I came to read Mr. Bagenhall's question, Whether Sir Charles intended to make court to me himself? I am sorry to tell you, Lucy, that I was a little more affected than I wished to be. Indeed, I shall keep a *look-out*, as you call it, upon myself. To say truth, I laid down the paper at that place, and was afraid to read the answer made to it. When I took it up, and read what followed, I might have spared, I saw, my foolish little tremors. See how frank I continue to be: but if you come not to this paragraph before you are aware, you need not read it to my uncle.

Mr. Bagenhall went away so much pleased with Sir Charles (as he owned) that Mr. Reeves encourages me to hope, some way may be found to prevent further mischief. Yet the condition, which Sir Charles has proposed for my forgiving the wretch—Upon my word, my dear, I desire not to see Sir Hargrave either upon his knees, or upon his feet: I am sure I could not see him without very violent emotions. His barbarity, his malice, his cruelty, have impressed me strongly: nor can I be glad to see the wretch with his disfigured mouth and lip. His lip, it seems, has been sewed up, and he wears a great black-silk patch upon the place.

I can't find that Sir Charles has heard from the

exasperated man, since Mr. Bagenhall left him yesterday.

I hope nothing will happen to overcloud to-morrow. I propose to myself as happy a day, as, in the present situation of things, can be given to your

HARRIET BYRON.

END OF VOL. IX.

Davison, Printer, Lombard-street,
Whitefriars, London.

